



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
January 22 - 29, 2016

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Inuit intuition: Three generations of Cape Dorset artists



Annie Pootoogook: *Family Sleeping in a Tent*, 2003-2004, pencil, ink, and pencil crayon; courtesy Museum of Contemporary Native Arts

- ▼ *Akunnittinni: A Kinngait Family Portrait*; works by Pitseolak Ashoona, Napachie Pootoogook, and Annie Pootoogook
- ▼ Opens Friday, Jan. 22; exhibit through April 1 (reception 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18); reopens May 23, through July
- ▼ Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, 108 Cathedral Place
- ▼ Entrance by museum admission; 505-983-1666

Posted: Friday, January 22, 2016 5:00 am| *Updated: 9:32 am, Mon Jan 25, 2016.*

Jennifer Levin

The Inuit people of Cape Dorset — Kinngait, in the Inuktitut language — were historically nomadic, traveling from camp to camp in family tribes according to the hunting and fishing seasons. Though strong on community, life in the remote Canadian Arctic wasn't easy. Temperatures remained below zero for months at a time. Women were often at the mercy of men's whims, which could turn violent and capricious in the harsh conditions. In 1913, the Hudson Bay Company opened a trading post in Cape Dorset, a village located on Dorset Island in the Qikiqtaaluk Region of Nunavut, Canada. Soon a white settlement grew around it. Pitseolak Ashoona was around nine years old (various sources put her birth date circa 1904) when the trading post opened and life in Kinngait began to change. By the time she was a young woman, the caribou population was in decline and the Canadian government was encouraging permanent settlement by the Inuit. The economy moved from a basis in hunting and trading to more creative pursuits, due to the influence of artist James Houston and the printmaking co-op he opened with local residents in the early 1960s. Today, Cape Dorset is internationally known as a center for Inuit art, and more than 20 percent of its labor force earns a living as artists.

Ashoona became one of Cape Dorset's best-known artists, producing more than 9,000 prints and drawings before her death in 1983. She began drawing in her fifties, to fill the

void she'd felt in the years since the untimely death of her husband, with whom she bore 17 children — only six of whom she raised to adulthood. (Some died in childhood and others were adopted by other Inuit families, according to custom.) Several of her sons became famous artists, as did her daughter, Napachie Pootoogook, and her granddaughter, Annie Pootoogook. Works by the three women are featured in *Akunnittinni: A Kinngait Family Portrait*, opening Friday, Jan. 22, at the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts. The works on display are on loan to the museum from the collection of Edward J. Guarino, a retired public school teacher and author from Yonkers, New York.

Loosely translated, the Inuktitut word “akunnittinni” means “between us.” The exhibition shows the stylistic and narrative elements that connect the women, including a humorous eye for detail and an impulse to tell stories about family life. The emphasis on autobiography gets stronger with each generation. Ashoona tended to focus on traditional Inuit ways, whereas Napachie (1938-2002) broke with the convention of drawing only positive memories and instead revealed some of the danger that permeated their past, including the practice of Inuit men trading their wives' sexual favors to white men for supplies. Annie Pootoogook, born in 1969, didn't start drawing until she was twenty-eight, after living through what she and others have described as a difficult childhood and early adulthood, dominated by the wrong men. Her rise to fame in the early 2000s was quick and stunning, her vibrant work immediately embraced for its edgy insistence on present-day life in the Canadian Arctic. In 2007, she was included in Documenta, an international expo held every five years in Kassel, Germany. She showed as a modern artist, rather than as a Native artist, which was unprecedented for someone from Cape Dorset. But within a few years Annie was off the grid, unreachable by journalists, and she has largely remained that way, though according to Candace Hopkins, former chief curator for MoCNA, who has been in contact with her, she is still making work.

Ashoona, Napachie Pootoogook, and Annie Pootoogook share a similar compositional aesthetic. The people in their prints and drawings dominate the frame and often appear flat and floating, though Annie tends to set her scenes in context — a tent, a living room, or just a ground to stand on, as in *A Portrait of Pitseolak* (2003-2004), in which her petite grandmother stares out at the viewer from behind a pair of thick-rimmed glasses, her hair covered in a polka-dot scarf. At first glance, Annie's work can appear to have been produced by a child, but the high level of craft at play in the complicated clothing and backgrounds, as well as the consistently droll, forthright tone of the pieces indicates skill and insight that can only be gained from experience. In *Watching the Simpsons on TV* (2003), a man helps a woman on with her amauti, an Inuit woman's parka fashioned so that a baby can stay warm in the hood. Next to them, a child sits on his knees, much too close to the TV. On the screen are Marge and Homer, an iconic and instantly recognizable symbol of modern culture. Annie drew a woman wearing an amauti in *Dream of Motherhood* (1969), a stone-cut print in which the composition begins

loosely at the bottom, with a woman's draped blouse, and becomes increasingly complex as the eye travels up her braids to her rapturous face to the mother above her head wearing a baby in her parka.

Of the work included in this exhibition, Napachie's stands out as the most shocking in its reflection of Inuit life. In *Eating His Mother's Remains* (1999-2000), a man chews a mouthful of food while sawing at a human leg. Cannibalism is not part of Inuit cultural practice, but it did happen in the past, in times of severe famine. Like the subject matter of many of her drawings, it was not something Napachie experienced or witnessed firsthand. She often drew from stories she'd heard about past events, such as *Male Dominance* (1995-1996), in which a grinning man is surrounded by five weeping women who are connected to one another by a rope. According to information provided to the museum by the drawing's owner, the man has just murdered the women's husbands so he can claim them as his own — a real risk before modernization, when a man could take what he wanted, and by force if necessary.

Every year, Cape Dorset issues a series of prints by local artists for sale to the public. The self-proclaimed capital of Inuit art is also well known for stone-carving, the medium embraced by Ashoona's sons, yet art from the region isn't often exhibited in Santa Fe. *Akunnittinni: A Kinngait Family Portrait* shows that, like family and cultural traditions, some artistic concerns are passed down, mother to daughter to granddaughter, as each generation turns to drawing for its own reasons. ◀

Direct Link: http://www.santafenewmexican.com/pasatiempo/art/museum_shows/inuit-intuition-three-generations-of-cape-dorset-artists/article_7d80aade-5878-5011-98e6-76fce5eee2eb.html

Filmmaker's journey follows Okpik's Dream

Sunday, January 24, 2016 11:28:44 EST PM



“All you see is the naked beauty of the world.”

With that said, Laura Rietveld is recounting the highlights of her adventures in Nunavik while filming her first documentary, *Okpik's Dream*.

The film recounts the story of Harry Okpik, a 60-year-old Inuit sled dog musher. Filmed over the course of four seasons, the crew followed the 600-kilometre-long Ivakkak Race run across Quebec's Arctic.

Okpik lost a leg when he was a young man following a hunting accident. After returning to his home community of Quaqtaq, Nunavik, after spending two-and-a-half years in hospital, he decided to follow his dream of raising and racing sled dogs. He had wanted to do so as a child but the slaughter of Inuit dogs by police in the 1950s and '60s had put an end to that dream.

Over the course of the next four years, Rietveld teamed up with a crew from Catbird Productions and travelled to Nunavik to follow Okpik during the Ivakkak sled race.

Being the only non-professional filmmaker on the crew, Rietveld described her learning curve as trial by fire.

"Working in the arctic is quite challenging, the conditions, the remoteness of it, it's difficult to rent vehicles, it's difficult to find accommodations at times. The cold is very difficult to work under. My own inexperience, just all of it was difficult," said Rietveld.

"I had never ridden a Ski-Doo before and the tundra is anything but flat," she said of the last year they followed the race for 500 metres by snowmobile.

"The cold was the most difficult part. Everything about it. Your fingers don't work in the cold, I got frostbite on my nose, trying to stay on the Ski-Doo, feeling like a fish out of water," said Rietveld.

But the experience was not without its payoff.

"It's an incredible opportunity to be travelling around Nunavik," said Rietveld. "It's incredibly beautiful. I've never experienced anything like it where there's nothing before you. There's no telephone pole, no house, all you see is the naked beauty of the world."

Her film is as about resilience, both of Okpik and the Inuit people, as much as it is about the Ivakkak itself.

"One of the hard things about speaking about the film is that I am not Inuit, so it is a different perspective," said Rietveld. "But if you were speaking to Harry, he would say that the ability to withstand the cold is part of what makes him Inuit, I think that is important to say ... for someone who is Inuit, the cold is intrinsically linked to who they are."

Raised in St. Catharines, Rietveld, whose family owns Creations by Helen, earned her masters degree in business. She worked for five years in the corporate division in newspapers and publishing.

“I resigned in 2010, gave back my BlackBerry because I decided that I wanted to create meaningful content. Perhaps it was a very naive thing to do, I don’t have training in film. It was quite difficult for the first few years but after about two years I was offered a position writing and directing the documentary,” she said.

The film has already won two awards — the Grand Prix Rigoberta Menchu Award at the 25th Montreal First People’s Festival and honourable mention at the Innsbruck Film Festival in the nature documentaries category. It has been nominated for a 2016 Canadian Screen Award, for which winners will be announced March 13.

Okpik himself is surprised at the attention that the film is receiving, Rietveld said.

“He is also surprised and proud and moved by the response. He never expected it to go that far. He had a nice quote. He said, ‘I thought it would go from here to there but it has gone everywhere.’”

As for her future, Rietveld is not yet ready to jump into another project.

“I’m taking some time to think about it. It was a very difficult experience and one that I would like to do again but I want to make sure that it is something that deeply resonates with me, like Harry’s story did.”

Direct Link: <http://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/2016/01/24/filmmakers-journey-follows-okpiks-dream>

The best music comes from the ... throat?

Carol Motsinger, cmotsinger@enquirer.com 3:26 p.m. EST January 26, 2016



(Photo: Provided)

What does she sound like?

This is the easiest question to ask. And the hardest to answer, when it comes to Tanya Tagaq, a Canadian Inuit throat singer who will perform at the Woodward Theater Saturday.

Drew Klein, performance curator for the Contemporary Arts Center, attempts to capture her wild, wordless song with his words.

"Whale songs released by heavy metal singers," he said.

Even the label "Inuit throat singer" doesn't quite answer the whole question. See, this is also not your mother's Inuit throat singing. Tagaq's self-taught, taking the tradition and slashing expectations with her own cutting edge. It's sort of deep-rooted musical customs meets Yoko Ono, Klein said.

And how does she do it? That's even more difficult to describe. Tagaq says it breaks down to just how the rest of us breathe: Exhalation and inhalation. And how do you start transforming breath into song? Spend a year trying to sound like your dog growling, she said in a tutorial video.

Klein actually prefers not knowing the precise mechanics behind this two-time Juno Award nominee's instrument.

"I find the mystery of it to be one of the exciting things," he said.

Facts are certainly not part of admission into the Contemporary Arts Center's presentation of Tagaq's soundscape to the film, "Nanook of the North."

But here are five things to be thinking about before heading to one of the most intriguing installments of the CAC's Black Box performance series:

Björk is her BFF. Tagaq garnered her first international attention with her appearance on Björk's 2004 release, "Medúlla" (She's also toured with the art pop singer.) Tagaq co-wrote and co-performed "Ancestors," a feverish, sparse piano ballad. "I remember first hearing Tanya's voice on the Bjork record," said Klein. "It was pretty transformative and exciting for me. I had never heard music like that."

It's terrifying and beautiful, disturbing and captivating. And Tagaq's voice renders Björk's contribution almost pedestrian. By her side, the Icelandic avant-garde hero sounds of this world. Björk, however, isn't her only high-profile collaborator: She also worked with Kronos Quartet – she's the minimalist force behind the "Requiem for a Dream" score. They created "Nunavut," a project that yielded a documentary, "A String Quartet in Her Throat."

She played Bonnaroo. Yes, that Bonnaroo. The one where 80,000 mud-crusted people barely sleep in a field for days to listen to live music from the likes of Kanye West, Radiohead, Pearl Jam and Paul McCartney. She performed just this last June.

After Cincinnati, Tagaq heads to Ann Arbor, Michigan, with her tour, before returning to her native Canada for the remaining scheduled dates.



Tagaq is part of the newly announced CAC Black Box performance series. (Photo: Provided/Ivan Otis)

Canadians like her better than Drake or Arcade Fire. Well, at least they did when it came to the most prestigious award in Canadian music. Her album, "Animism," won the Polaris Music Prize in 2014, beating hip hop chart-topper Drake and indie-rock darlings Arcade Fire. Since 2006, the prize has been awarded to the best Canadian album, regardless of genre or popularity.

It's Canada's version of the United Kingdom's Mercury Prize. And if the U.S.'s Grammy for Best Album actually meant something. She scored a hefty cash prize (\$30,000) and joins an exclusive list of Canadian performers, including Caribou, Feist and favorites Arcade Fire (The group won in 2011.)

What's a Nanook of the North? This 1922 American silent film documentary focuses on the life of an Inuk, Nanook, and his family in northern Quebec, Canada. From the film history perspective, the Robert Joseph Flaherty feature appears in textbooks for a couple reasons. It was the first real commercially successful documentary. And, incidentally, isn't a true documentary.

That's because it's also discussed as one of the original docudramas, meaning there are narrative additions to unscripted, real-life moments. "It is considered a landmark piece of film, but it is considered somewhat racist by the way it makes the Inuit people look uncivilized," Klein said.

He compares it to "The Birth of a Nation," the 1915 D.W. Griffith film that is equally revered for its innovation in storytelling and film techniques – and reviled for its portrayal of African-Americans.

"'Nanook of the North' is not without controversial elements that can be readdressed today," Klein said.

What can we expect at the Woodward Theatre: The performance will be similar to earlier shows: She will sing accompanied by a violinist and a drummer.

She's not, however, providing a score or soundtrack for the film. It's more of a "contemporary conversation," Klein said. " ... It's a dialogue with what is happening on stage."

The Toronto International Film Festival commissioned the project in 2012.

"I think the story about how she is inserting herself into this work of historic cinema and reclaiming it in a way that celebrates her culture and her background is really impressive," Klein said.

If You Go:

What: Tanya Tagaq: Nanook of the North

When: 8 p.m. Saturday

Where: Woodward Theater, 1404 Main St., Over-the-Rhine.

Admission: \$23, \$18 CAC members.

For more: 513-246-4157; www.contemporaryartscenter.org.

Direct Link: <http://www.cincinnati.com/story/entertainment/arts/2016/01/26/best-music-comes-throat/79123004/>

Red Rising Magazine offers new voice for indigenous people

Uncensored, unfiltered indigenous magazine launching their second issue this week

Jessica Antony · CBC Arts [1 Hour Ago](#)



(Red Rising Magazine)

Winnipeg's Aboriginal Youth Opportunities is a youth movement committed to providing the city's indigenous community with more opportunities. One of its leaders, Lenard Monkman, met with a collective of 11 other young Winnipeggers last summer to discuss the next step in the mission — creating a magazine. Consisting primarily of students, writers and designers, the collective developed the idea of Red Rising Magazine as a means of providing a platform for indigenous peoples to tell their stories: unfiltered, unskewed, and from their own perspective.

"There can't be reconciliation without the continued exposure of the truth," Monkman said. "The more we share these stories, the more they become a part of the collective consciousness."

"There can't be reconciliation without the continued exposure of the truth." - *Lenard Monkman, community organizer at Aboriginal Youth Opportunities*

Having had their own experiences with media and feeling that their voices weren't accurately portrayed, the collective felt it was necessary to have a place where they could speak their minds and give others a peek into indigenous peoples' thoughts. They also wanted to inspire a whole new generation of creative minds within the community.

"There's so much untapped talent, so this is really meant to inspire the next writers, artists, and thinkers, and give them an avenue to express their ideas," Monkman said.



"Tree" by Jackie Traverse, featured in the first edition of Red Rising Magazine. (Jackie Traverse)

The collective put their first issue out on Oct. 9, 2015 and are now preparing for the launch of their second issue on Jan. 27, 2016. While the first issue focused on empowerment — featuring articles, artwork, and poems — the second issue is focused on truth and reconciliation.

"When we talk about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, people are only talking about it from a residential school aspect," Monkman explains. "That's one policy that's been put in place that's [caused] Indigenous people in this country to suffer, but there are so many other stories out there that need to be told, and I think *Red Rising* gives people an opportunity to tell those stories."

Their hope is to target indigenous and non-indigenous peoples alike, drawing attention to both the real history and daily life of Canada's indigenous peoples.

Red Rising's second issue will also feature poetry, artwork, stories and Mi'kmaq professor, activist and politician Pam Palmater as its guest writer. In future issues they plan to include a section called "Behind the Wall," which will feature the writing of incarcerated indigenous peoples.

Copies of the magazine can be purchased from the [Red Rising website](#) or from Neechi Niche Art Store and Gallery, inside Neechi Commons — a community business complex that caters to Winnipeg's indigenous community. The collaboration with Neechi and other artists and businesses within the community is imperative to *Red Rising*'s mission.

"The more we are able to reach out to different parts of the community, the more people will see the value in having something like a magazine going forward," Monkman said. "You can really use a magazine to bring different people from the community together."

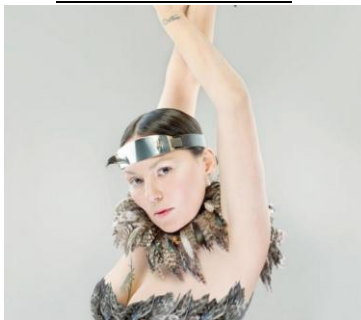
Red Rising Magazine. Co-sponsored by Fernwood Publishing. Wed, Jan 27 6:30pm. \$5. Neechi Commons, 865 Main Street, Winnipeg. <http://neechi.ca/special-events/>

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/beta/arts/red-rising-magazine-offers-new-voice-for-indigenous-people-1.3420380>

Northern Light

Tanya Tagaq's music is a singular mixture of the traditional and avant-garde

BY STEVEN ROSEN · JANUARY 27TH, 2016 · MUSIC



Tanya Tagaq's Cincinnati performance will feature her voice and the film Nanook of the North. - Photo: Ivan Otis

Tanya Tagaq, the extraordinary Inuit throat singer, will provide vocal accompaniment to a screening of the silent film *Nanook of the North* at Cincinnati's Woodward Theater this weekend. Her unusual background and performance style need introductions.

Tagaq grew up in far northern Canada, at the small Arctic Archipelago town of Cambridge Bay in the largest and least-populated Canadian territory, Nunavut. Her town is on Victoria Island, one of the world's largest.

The Inuit are indigenous residents, originating from the land where they continue to live. They used to be called Eskimo, a term that has fallen out of favor.

But while Tagaq very much identifies with those roots — her mother lived in an igloo until age 12 — her father was from Great Britain. After attending a residential high school at Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories, she moved far away to study at Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, where she fell in love with cutting-edge contemporary art forms.

As a result, her music is a singular mixture of the traditional and the avant-garde. The Contemporary Arts Center is the organization bringing her to town.

"I was born in the north, but then I went down to the university and art school," Tagaq says by phone from her home in Cambridge Bay. "My mind was blown with the freedom of everything. I was in my late 20s when I started touring, and I would love going to contemporary art galleries. I just absorbed the contemporary art and the cultural climate and how people treated each other in different countries."

Tagaq performs with a violinist, cellist and drummer whose approach combines Free Jazz and New Classical music. Her throat singing (Tagaq's voice can produce a fundamental pitch and overtones simultaneously) is improvised; her shouts and moans are frequently accompanied with frenetic, dramatic body movements.

The Cincinnati show will not be too physically intense, she says, because she wants people to also watch the movie.

But it will be different.

"To me improvisation is the closest thing to actual human existence, because no matter how much we try to control ourselves and our lives, the very essence of being alive is that we're not in control," she says. "I like the idea you can start making sounds and it can carry itself like a perpetual motion device. I feel like it has almost nothing to do with me during my performances."

Though Tagaq is a Modernist, she also is a fierce defender and supporter of Inuit traditions. She is grateful for her upbringing in that environment.

"Nunavut itself is over 2 million square kilometers of land, with just 40,000 people spread all over it due to the harsh climate," she says. "There are no trees, it goes down to minus 50 degrees Celsius, there's ocean ice almost all year long and it's completely isolated."

"I feel particularly lucky because I got to live in a place where the land owns me," she continues. "I got to go around closer to the original state of life and humanity, as far as I'm concerned. I'm very lucky to have that perspective when it comes to my outlook about the rest of society."

In Inuit culture, throat singing is done as a call-and-response duet, a friendly competition between two women who use it to practice mental acuity and lung capacity. Partly because it was looked upon with disdain by outsiders trying to westernize Inuit society, Tagaq doesn't recall seeing it practiced much when she grew up. But when she was in college, her mother sent her traditional Inuit throat singing on a cassette tape that had the words "80s Hits" scratched out.

"I heard the tape when no one else was there with me, so I'd sing along because I loved it," Tagaq says. "Soon I was making songs in the shower, then in the street, and it sort of snowballed. I didn't set out to learn it — I had no intention of it going anywhere. It just happened naturally, like picking up a paintbrush and having a natural knowledge of paint somehow."

Tagaq has received much acclaim, especially in Canada, for her new take on the traditional musical form. Her 2005 album *Sinaa* won several Juno Awards, including Best Female Artist, and her 2014 album *Animism* won Canada's \$30,000 Polaris Music Prize, beating out Arcade Fire and Drake. The album also won the Juno Award for Aboriginal Album of the Year and was nominated for Alternative Album of the Year.

Nanook of the North is a classic but controversial 1922 "documentary" by Robert Flaherty about Inuit life. It's controversial because elements are staged and casted, but it's classic because of the hardships involved in the filmmaking and its portrayal of a life little seen in the U.S.

The director spent 1914-1915 living with the Inuit in Canada. Flaherty's initial footage was destroyed by a fire in his editing room, and he wasn't able to get back to the area until 1920. He then collaborated with the Inuit people on the filmmaking (some were his camera crew). Much of what he showed was life as lived, but he also initiated rather than observed some elements. For instance, he included a sight gag — members of a family get out of a kayak as if departing a clown car — that raises ire now.

Tagaq acknowledges mixed feelings about the film, but says there is much to admire. "I remember seeing it as a kid and thinking, 'It's not like that, what the hell?'" she says. "There's a lot of buffoonery in the film, like where everyone comes out of one kayak. It makes me so angry when everyone laughs at that. But I've been touring with it for almost four years and I've come to peace with it. And I do have a strong sense of pride when I see the film because it shows the landscape and shows some of the traditional life.

"Maybe when Flaherty first went up there his intent was to objectify people," she adds. "(But) he ended up respecting people."

Direct Link: http://citybeat.com/cincinnati/article-34499-northern_light.html

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Air Inuit, Air North get high marks for on-time southern flights

Analysts studied 6 months of data from major routes in southern Canada

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 22, 2016 8:00 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 22, 2016 8:24 AM CT



An Air North aircraft takes off from the Whitehorse airport. The analysis focused only on major routes in southern Canada. (Air North)

Two northern airlines — Air Inuit and Air North — have good records for on-time arrivals when flying in the south, a new study has found.

The 10 and 3, a website focusing on data analysis and mapping, **reviewed six months worth of flight information** from eight major Canadian cities in the south. Any flight arriving within 15 minutes of its scheduled arrival time was considered on time.

It found that Air Inuit had the best record, with flights arriving on time 90.8 per cent of the time. The data set was small, however, as analysts looked at Air Inuit's short-haul Montreal-Quebec City route and not its flights to and from regional airports in Nunavut and Nunavik.

Air North ranked fourth, but its data set was limited to the airline's short Calgary-Edmonton route, and not its more frequent and longer flights to and from Yukon communities.

Arik Motskin of *The 10 and 3* recognizes the southern focus of the study, but said it still shows Northern carriers are sometimes out-performing the big players.

"There really is a lot more competition in the airline industry in Canada than some might think, and some of these smaller regional and Northern airlines are available, even on some of the major routes," Motskyn said.

Among the larger carriers, Westjet came out on top, with 86 per cent of its flights between major southern centres arriving on time. Air Canada flights were on time 83.3 per cent of the time, and Air Canada Jazz 83 per cent.

The worst-performing airline studied was Sunwing, a discount air carrier whose main business is transporting vacationers to palm-lined beaches in Mexico and the Caribbean. Its on-time performance for major routes within Canada was 63.1 per cent.

Motskin said *The 10 and 3* now hopes to expand its analysis to look at more commercial flights arriving and departing from more Canadian airports.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/air-inuit-air-north-flights-on-time-1.3414513>

Reversal of transparency act a step backwards, Ambrose says

By [Marcia Love](#), Spruce Grove Examiner/Stony Plain Reporter
Friday, January 22, 2016 3:21:40 MST PM



Rona Ambrose said the federal government's decision to no longer withhold funding to bands that don't comply with the FNFTA will lessen transparency.

Rona Ambrose says the federal government's decision to cease enforcement of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (FNFTA) is a step in the wrong direction.

The Sturgeon River–Parkland MP and interim Conservative leader said the government's decision to no longer freeze funding to First Nations that don't comply with the act makes it harder for band members and other Canadians to see and understand how tax dollars are being spent.

"The troubling thing that usually emerges from less transparency is less accountability down the road, which is exactly the opposite of what First Nations and other Canadians expect," she stated.

Moreover, Ambrose said the move is one that's "being done by stealth."

“The government has just decided to stop enforcing it, instead of bringing their reasons for getting rid of it to Parliament so they can face questions and debate,” she stated.

When Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett announced last month Ottawa would reinstate funds being withheld, as well as suspending any court actions against First Nations who have not complied with the act, she said the intention is to “engage in discussions on transparency and accountability that are based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership and that build towards a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples.”

The FNFTA, which was passed in 2013, requires 581 First Nations to make their audited consolidated financial statements and chief and council members’ salaries and expenses available to the public by posting them on the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website. Those who didn’t comply by the deadline faced having non-essential funding cut.

According to Aboriginal Affairs, 197 First Nations had not complied with the act by the Sept. 1, 2015 deadline — representing about 34 per cent of the bands required to do so.

Ambrose believes the law has been a very valuable tool for First Nations people living on reserves to learn more about how their band finances are being managed.

“We did see some troubling examples of waste and mismanagement emerge as a result of the act, but the most important outcome of the act has been a level of transparency that shows examples like that are the exception, not the rule,” she said.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) is also disappointed by the government’s decision.

“This government was elected on a promise to improve transparency and accountability, and this decision does exactly the opposite,” stated CTF Federal Director Aaron Wudrick. “A law without consequence for non-compliance is a toothless law. As such, soon many First Nations people across the country will again be in the dark as to how their elected leaders spend public dollars.”

According to Wudrick, as of mid-December 2015 most bands were complying with the law and only eight out of 581 First Nations failed to file FNFTA documentation for 2013-14 — a compliance rate of 98.6 per cent. For 2014-15, he said 38 out of 581 First Nations have not yet complied, for a compliance rate of 93.5 per cent.

“The FNFTA is a critical tool for band members to hold their First Nations politicians to account, in exactly the same way similar laws do for federal, provincial and municipal politicians across Canada,” said Wudrick. “Suspending enforcement of this law is wrong, and completely undermines the very principles this government claims to be advancing.”

The transparency act brought up questions on the salaries of chiefs and councillors at several First Nations. One of the most controversial cases was that of Chief Ron Giesbrecht of Kwikwetlem First Nation in B.C, who in 2013 was paid more than \$914,000. This resulted in many band members calling for his resignation.

It's cases like these that Enoch Cree Nation Coun. Michelle Wilson said led to the FNFTA "painting all First Nations with a broad stroke." She doesn't believe it's necessary for the federal government to step in and force bands to be transparent, because it's a practice they should willingly do themselves.

"Good governance principles require that any First Nations government is open and transparent with their members on all issues, especially those financial," she said. "Nobody should need to tell them to do that."

She added the financial information "really wasn't anybody else's business but band members' business."

Enoch filed its financial statements and schedule of remuneration and expenses prior to the September 2015 deadline.

Ambrose emphasized the act has no drawbacks and simply fosters good, transparent and accountable financial management for First Nations communities.

"The benefits are clear. When First Nations people have easier access to up-to-date, clear information about their own governance, it will make them more likely to be fuller participants in that governance, and encourage greater accountability from leadership," she stated.

The MP noted it's important for any government agency that spends tax dollars to continuously monitor, audit and improve its practices to ensure accountability. "That's especially important in the case of First Nations, because those tax dollars have very clear purposes in terms of supporting the economic and social well-being of those living on reserve," she said. "(The act) was another useful step in a process of continuing improvement, so now we really are moving backward from where we were."

Direct Link: <http://www.stonyplainreporter.com/2016/01/22/reversal-of-transparency-act-a-step-backwards-ambrose-says>

Opinion: Aboriginal Equity Partners support Northern Gateway

BY BRUCE DUMONT, DAVID MACPHEE, ELMER DERRICK AND ELMER GHOSTKEEPER, SPECIAL TO THE SUN JANUARY 22, 2016



Edmonton, AB-20060714 - The huge oil storage tanks sit in rows at the Enbridge facility in Sherwood Park, AB. Photo credit: Colleen De Neve / Calgary Herald (For Business Story by Shaun Polczer)
Assignment ID# 00003803B ORG XMIT: POS2013030414221730

The subject of Aboriginal consultation, or lack thereof, is a hot-button topic of conversation these days between Aboriginal leaders and natural resource companies — along with many journalists, lobbyists, and lawyers. These discussions are a positive step forward.

But when it comes to the Northern Gateway project, these conversations have created two alarming misconceptions.

The first is that First Nations and Métis communities across British Columbia and Alberta are uniformly opposed to Northern Gateway, and second, a proposed tanker ban along the west coast has undisputed support from impacted First Nations and Métis communities.

As First Nations and Métis owners of Northern Gateway, we are pleased to see support growing in our communities and that our membership group will expand in the coming months. Northern Gateway has made great progress in establishing new dialogues and partnerships with First Nations and Métis communities and peoples. Our ownership and involvement has led to changes and renewal in the project.

One of Canada's highest priorities should be the reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. We welcome the new federal government's commitment to this reconciliation. Northern Gateway is a new way of doing business and sets a precedent for collaborative partnerships between First Nations and Métis communities and the resource industry.

The second misconception is that a proposed crude oil tanker ban along the West Coast has unanimous First Nations and Métis support. In fact, as owners of Northern Gateway, we are concerned with the negative impact a potential tanker ban would have on our communities. We are grateful for the recent opportunity to meet with the Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport, and share with him our concerns.

Collectively, our communities stand to lose more than \$1 billion in long-term generational economic and educational benefits from the Northern Gateway project if the federal government proceeds with this proposal. Oil is already being transported by rail through our lands which means our communities are taking all the risks with no ownership or benefits.

We are pleased with the government of Canada's stated intentions to consult deeply with Aboriginal people on policy initiatives as a true reflection of the importance of the relationship between us. The government's future consultation on a possible tanker ban must meet the standard of consultation that is required on new projects like Northern Gateway.

As owners of Northern Gateway and the impacted First Nations and Métis peoples, we look forward to the government of Canada tabling its consultation proposal on the tanker ban. We believe that it is vitally important, legally and constitutionally, that their plan gets it right.

As Prime Minister Trudeau recently stated, "the constitutionally-guaranteed rights of First Nations are a sacred obligation that [the government] carries forward". We expect to be consulted on a proposed tanker ban, as per the duty to consult and our inescapable economic rights under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

We have fought hard to have rights that are inherent to us recognized under Section 35. The duty to consult is also the very first step toward reconciliation. Before any tanker ban can ever be contemplated, our inherent rights, including economic rights, which have been recognized by the Constitution Act, 1982 and subsequent court decisions, must be addressed. This means the government must consult with us in the same way as they must before any project can take place on our lands and traditional territory.

The British Columbia Supreme Court recently rendered its decision in the Gitga'at and Coastal First Nations v. British Columbia and Northern Gateway case. We welcome the court's direction for more consultation with First Nations and Métis people and Northern Gateway's support of the same. It is through consultation and new dialogues that we've grown our Aboriginal Equity Partnerships.

The Aboriginal Equity Partners represent the 28 First Nations and Métis communities in British Columbia and Alberta who are owners and supporters of Northern Gateway. We have a direct and meaningful role in the environmental protection of lands and waters along the pipeline corridor and in marine operations.

We want to work collaboratively with all governments on this critical Canadian infrastructure. Northern Gateway will provide long-term educational, business, and economic opportunities, while at the same time protecting the environment and our traditional way of life.

Our ownership in this project will ensure First Nations and Métis peoples are active participants and receive full benefits. We are building a better Canada and our ownership of Northern Gateway will provide a prosperous future for generations to come.

Bruce Dumont is President, Métis Nation British Columbia; David MacPhee is President, Aseniwuche Winewak Nation; Chief Elmer Derrick represents Gitksan Nation Hereditary Chiefs; and Elmer Ghostkeeper is Councillor, Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/opinion/editorials/opinion+aboriginal+equity+partners+suport+northern/11670808/story.html>

Huu-ay-aht First Nation buys 11 properties in Bamfield

Village of about 300 people has struggled as tourism potential hasn't paid off

By All Points West, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 23, 2016 4:44 PM PT Last Updated: Jan 23, 2016 4:44 PM PT



A floatplane lands in Bamfield's harbour. Bamfield is on the west coast of Vancouver Island, about a four hour drive from Victoria. (Amber Strocel/Flickr)

The **Huu-ay-aht First Nation** has announced the purchase of 11 properties in the remote Vancouver Island community of Bamfield.

The properties range from pieces of land to buildings and businesses, as well as a lodge and an airport.

Huu-ay-aht's elected chief councillor, Robert Dennis, says his community is betting on Bamfield's potential as a tourist destination.

"This connects with one of our overall objectives. We have an old village site here a few kilometres from Bamfield. It's got a historical designation with Canada," Dennis told *All Points West* host Robyn Burns.

"We certainly want to develop tourism around that and then certainly ecotourism can play a huge role here."

Bamfield is a village of about 300 people that has fallen on hard times in recent years.

A number of properties in the village were purchased by an Alberta businessman, but development plans never came to fruition and the buildings fell into disrepair.

"It's a really good thing for our community to see these properties come back into play and bought by somebody who wants to do something," said Keith Wyton, Bamfield director with the **Alberni Clayquot Regional District**.

Huu-ay-aht First Nation says it plans to re-open some of the businesses in time for the upcoming tourist season.

Dennis says some of the properties were also purchased for their cultural value — Bamfield borders on Huu-ay-aht's traditional territory.

"In the whole Bamfield inlet there's archaeological evidence of our use and occupation as far back as 5,000, 6,000 years ago," he said.

Dennis says his First Nation hopes to buy more property in Bamfield as opportunities arise.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bamfield-first-nation-1.3416342>

Métis entrepreneur opens tour company in heart of oilsands country

Adventure Borealis will offer snowshoeing, ice fishing, trapping and arts and crafts

By Andrea Huncar, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 23, 2016 1:28 PM MT Last Updated: Jan 23, 2016 10:03 PM MT



The northern lights on Willow Lake, the base for Northern Lights Tours. (Stan Novotny Photography)

The economic downturn hasn't slowed down a Fort McMurray-area Métis entrepreneur who is making the most of what's in the sky, rather than in the ground.

On Friday, Ron Sturgess Sr. and his partner Jordan Huppie officially launched Adventure Borealis, a new adventure company in the heart of oilsands country.

By night, visitors take in the wonders of the northern lights. By day, they're introduced to traditional indigenous activities around Willow Lake, such as snowshoeing, ice fishing, trapping and arts and crafts.



Former oil and gas worker Ron Sturgess Sr. and his partner have just launched Adventure Borealis.
(Adventure Borealis)

"We have some spectacular views of the northern lights," said Sturgess, an outdoor specialist from Anzac, a small town largely made up of Métis and First Nations people, 46 km southeast of Fort McMurray.

He said the aim is to provide "a memory and experience that leaves them and Fort McMurray in a positive light - they've seen the oilsands but, hey, there's more to do."

Sturgess, who describes himself as "an oil and gas guy," knows all about that. In 2013, after 25 years, he left the industry, which he praised for doing "me and my family very well" over that time.

"I joke once in awhile because I say that our families have oil in our veins, as opposed to blood," he said.

While he emphasized the importance of the oilsands, he said there is much more to Fort McMurray, not least the stunning beauty of the region.

"People just think it's just devastated by oilsands," said Sturgess. "And when I take you out 15 minutes east up the river, you lose cellphone coverage and you wouldn't know you're anywhere near the oilsands developments and you're out in the bush."

Indoors, guests can look forward to a warm bowl of stew and freshly baked bannock. They learn to make traditional indigenous bread under the tutelage of "five-time Anzac bannock-making champion" Kevin Tremblay.

Tremblay is employed by the 100-per-cent Métis-owned and operated company on team that also includes an astronomer, a photographer and a craft and jewelry maker, all there to enhance the experience.

Over the past year, while the markets tumbled, Adventure Borealis began testing the waters, soon attracting visitors from across Canada and as far away as China and Japan.

Sturgess chuckled when asked about claims that the northern lights are popular among Japanese tourists because people think they bring good fortune to a child conceived under them.

"I've heard the rumours," he said. "Because northern lights do mean a lot to a bunch of different groups in different ways. We are going to be prepared for that."

Sturgess, who operates two other local businesses, said he thinks the tourism venture will also have a ripple effect, giving a boost to struggling hotels and restaurants.

As for the wisdom of launching a new business as the economy stalls, Sturgess is not daunted.

"I've been here a long time and I've seen it all up, down, left and right," he said. "And times like this, where we slow down a little bit - it forces us small business owners to think a little bit smarter, work a little bit harder and do things better. And then hopefully when things do pick up, you're on the right track and you stay on that track."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/m%C3%A9tis-entrepreneur-opens-tour-company-in-heart-of-oilsands-country-1.3416622>

Todd MacKay: All politicians must disclose basic financial information — including First Nations politicians

TODD MACKAY, NATIONAL POST | January 27, 2016 9:35 AM ET



Gord Waldner/The StarPhoenixWallace Fox, chief or "Okimaw" of the Onion Lake Cree Nation near Lloydminster, said he's pleased with a Federal Court decision regarding financial disclosure.

There are two options when trouble appears on the horizon: find a way to avoid it, or make a plan to endure it. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett is facing such an issue, and she has only a few months to address it.

Bennett recently suspended enforcement of The First Nations Financial Transparency Act. The act requires First Nations leaders to publish their salaries, expenses and the band's basic financial information online. More than 90 per cent of First Nations have complied. The previous federal government withheld non-essential funding from the few who did not and took legal action to enforce the legislation, but Bennett has handed back the money and called off the lawyers. The deadline for the next disclosure is at the end of July, so time is short.

"We will work in full partnership with First Nations leadership and organizations on the way forward to improve accountability and transparency," wrote Bennett in a statement released just before Christmas. She did not say how she hopes to improve upon the three key pillars of the current legislation.

It's standard for government-owned companies to provide basic financial accountability to the people.

First, the legislation requires First Nations chiefs and councillors to disclose their salaries. Those disclosures show that Boneparte Indian Band Chief Randy Porter served without any pay and Kwikwetlem First Nation Chief Ron Giesbrecht received \$930,793 in 2013-14. The legislation could be expanded to include salaries from regional and national chiefs' associations, but Bennett has to, at the very least, maintain the current salary disclosure requirements.

Second, the legislation also requires First Nations leaders to disclose their expenses. Many First Nations leaders didn't have any expenses, while some racked up significant bills, such as O'Chiese First Nations Chief Darren Whitford, who claimed more than \$100,000 worth of expenses. Again, there's room for improvement, as the current legislation doesn't require leaders to justify their expenses or show receipts. But again, Bennett will have to ensure expense totals are publicly tallied.

Which leads to the third requirement: the disclosure of the band's basic financial information. The Assembly of First Nations criticized the legislation because it "forces

First Nations to disclose details about own source revenue from band-operated businesses and enterprises that hurt their ability to compete with other businesses.”

The chief who led the legal fight against Ottawa makes his point more bluntly. “It’s always about this discrimination and sorry to say, for me it’s racism,” said Chief Wallace Fox of the Onion Lake First Nation. “It’s discriminatory legislation because no other race is subject to this legislation in Canada except Indian people.”

Chief Fox is simply wrong. Even though more than 500 First Nations have disclosed these basic financial statements, no examples of economic injury have been cited. Further, it’s standard for government-owned companies to provide basic financial accountability to the people. Canada Post’s annual report is 142 pages and B.C. Hydro’s annual report is 106-pages long. Canada Post President Deepak Chopra makes about half a million dollars and B.C. Hydro’s entire executive team have their salaries posted online. It would be foolish for government-owned companies to attempt to limit accountability to people who live within their borders.

Bennett cannot allow a few First Nations to hide basic financial information that every politician and Crown corporation releases as a matter of routine. Bennett has taken on a herculean task of appeasing Chief Fox and a few others who are trying to hide information, but she won’t succeed without capitulating on the three current accountability requirements. And the clock is ticking: there’s only a few months until the next deadline for disclosures.

There is only one realistic alternative: begin enforcing the current legislation. Bennett cannot allow weakened accountability requirements or endless discussions to leave people in First Nations communities in the dark after the disclosure deadline this summer.

National Post

Todd MacKay is the prairie director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/todd-mackay-all-politicians-must-disclose-basic-financial-information-including-first-nations-politicians>

Aboriginal Community Development

How Nunavut came to be: all the dreams, all the blunders

"We have this really important slice of Canadian history, not just Nunavut history"

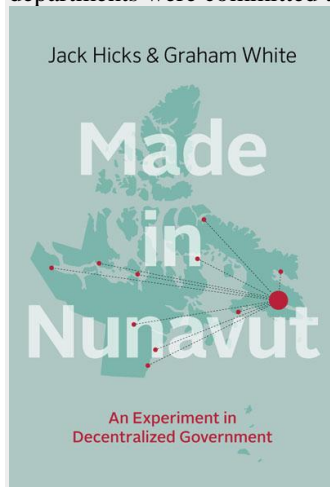
JIM BELL, January 22, 2016 - 3:59 pm



The first sitting of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, held April 1, 1999 inside the gym at Iqaluit's Inuksuk High School. Made in Nunavut: An Experiment in Decentralized Government, by Jack Hicks and Graham White, tells the story of how that day came to be and how after that day the Nunavut government implemented the decentralization of territorial government headquarters jobs. (FILE PHOTO)



Jean Chrétien, then the prime minister, during celebrations held April 1, 1999 to mark the birth of Nunavut. The process leading up to that event was heavily influenced by Liberal partisanship and patronage, but at the same time, federal officials at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and other departments were committed to getting the new territory up and running. (FILE PHOTO)



You can order copies of Made in Nunavut: An Experiment in Decentralized Government from UBC Press or download a PDF from Google Play Books. A soft cover version will appear June 1, 2016.

Thanks to two well-known academics, it's now down on paper: the convoluted, surprising story of how Nunavut came to be.

In a magisterial book that pulls no punches, entitled *Made in Nunavut: An Experiment in Decentralized Government*, Jack Hicks and Graham White follow the tortuous journey that Nunavut's planners began in 1993 when they set out to create the Nunavut territory promised in Article 4 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

Hicks, a university and college lecturer living in Saskatchewan, spent many years in Nunavut, and in 1995 helped create the Nunavut Implementation Commission's first blueprint for Nunavut, *Footprints in New Snow*.

For co-author White, a professor emeritus at the University of Toronto's Department of Political Science who specializes in studying the structures of government, the creation of Nunavut offered a rare chance to watch people build a new government from scratch.

"That's the Super Bowl for guys like me," White said in an interview.

It's not just for academics — *Made in Nunavut* is written for anyone who wants to know how and why the Nunavut government became what it is today.

"We really hope it will be read for some time in the high schools and by NS [Nunavut Sivuniksavut] people and so on. We have this really important slice of Canadian history, not just Nunavut history," White said.

They've dedicated their book to the memory of Laura Ulluriaq Gauthier, a brilliant young staff member at Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. who died suddenly in 2001 from a brain aneurysm at the age of 30.

"We are convinced that, had she lived, the GN would have been noticeably more successful," they write in their preface.

And to represent their overarching theme, they turn to a quote from Ulluriaq Gauthier: "Inuit don't want a government that's different, we want a government that's better."

And did the Inuit of Nunavut get a government's that's better?

No, they didn't. Hicks and White find that from its very birth, Nunavut was served poorly by its political leaders — and its government still suffers from anemic leadership.

But that's not the fault of decentralization — the policy under which 459 Government of Nunavut head office jobs were distributed among 10 communities outside Iqaluit after 1999.

They find that decentralization — which should more accurately be called "deconcentration" — was, on balance, a qualified success and that it's not to blame for the political and bureaucratic bungling that continues to plague Nunavut.

“The GN has throughout its history been hampered by a lack of competence, resulting in serious policy and administrative failures. Decentralization, like other GN initiatives, has suffered from political and bureaucratic incompetence,” Hicks and White said.

They also dispel some common misconceptions about GN’s decentralization policy, which former Premier Paul Okalik implemented during his first term.

One is the notion that Okalik invented the policy himself and then arbitrarily imposed it on Nunavut, an unfounded conspiracy theory that led many critics to refer to it as “Paul’s folly.”

But some kind of decentralized government structure had been part of the dream of Nunavut since the late 1970s.

And the GN’s decentralization model — first created by the Nunavut Implementation Commission — enjoyed universal support: from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the federal government, and eventually the Government of the Northwest Territories.

“People can argue about decentralization, but I don’t think we should blame Okalik. At that time it was a collective leadership decision. He made a decision and he did it. Personally I think that’s to his credit,” Hicks said in an interview.

White said he was surprised to discover the deep commitment to Nunavut among staff at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development who worked for DIAND’s Nunavut secretariat.

“I heard again and again — and I believe this unquestionably to be true — that the key people at the Nunavut secretariat in DIAND really wanted to make this happen,” White said.

Hicks said the federal government played the role of “honest broker” in co-operation with NTI and the NIC and that it was the Government of the Northwest Territories that behaved in an “arrogant and distant” manner.

He also said they found that when political leaders pounded their chests and fought each other in public, their unelected officials kept working together.

“At various times, people were steaming and stomping their feet, but everybody remained committed to the ultimate goal. And some people were under orders to make it happen regardless,” Hicks said.

They also point out that decentralization has helped the territorial government get a little closer to its Inuit employment targets.

The proportion of Inuit employment in the 10 communities that received decentralized GN headquarters jobs — 55 per cent — is much higher than in Iqaluit and higher than the GN's Nunavut-wide Inuit employment figure of about 50 per cent.

“It is worth observing that one hears far more complaining about decentralization in Iqaluit than in the rest of Nunavut,” the book says.

But there's one big objective that decentralization failed to achieve: government closer to the people.

The headquarters employees located in the 10 smaller communities brought little power or authority with them — and political power continues to be concentrated increasingly in Iqaluit.

And since the territory's early years, half a dozen assistant deputy minister jobs located outside of Iqaluit by Interim Commissioner Jack Anawak in 1998 have all been pulled back to the capital.

In addition, the GN has quietly shifted many other decentralized jobs back to Iqaluit.

Another big problem is that Nunavut planners assumed the territory would get a state-of-the-art telecommunications system.

That never happened and “woefully inadequate satellite-based IT has had debilitating effects on decentralization and on the GN generally.”

Another mistaken assumption was that most GN jobs, including decentralized jobs, would be easy to fill.

That never happened either — because few NWT employees were willing to move to Nunavut and a big wave of highly-qualified job applications they expected to receive from southern Canada never materialized.

And at many of the decentralized GN job sites in the smaller communities, the available openings required professional qualifications that few Inuit in the communities possessed.

However, one belated success story is the wildlife office in Igloolik, which in 2010 was held up as a disastrous failure, with less than half of its 22 jobs filled. But by 2013, it was fully staffed.

As for the GN's long record of incompetence and policy failure, which they describe at length in the final chapters of the book, one contributing factor was the hiring of inexperienced people near the beginning of the project.

White said this included the 12 Inuit assistant deputy ministers that Interim Commissioner Anawak hired in March and April of 1998.

Some did well — but many did not.

“Frankly it became clear to me in a couple of meetings I was at with some of them that they didn’t necessarily have the kind of experience that was going to be needed. I really have the sense that – not intentionally – a lot of the Inuit were being set up to fail,” White said.

For Nunavut political junkies, the book is loaded with juicy insider revelations, some related to the partisan political patronage that tainted the process in the years leading up to April 1, 1999.

One is that Dennis Patterson, then a prominent Progressive Conservative, was rejected as chief commissioner of the NIC by the Liberal government that took power in 1993.

And even Laura Ulluriaq Gauthier, hired in 1998 as assistant deputy minister of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, was told that after April 1, 1999, she would not keep her job — because of her lack of Liberal connections.

This occurred at a time when the Office of the Interim Commissioner, headed by former Liberal MP Jack Anawak, was stuffed with Liberal consultants and operatives.

Hicks and White also highlight the Nunavut government’s nearly unbroken record of failure in social policy, such as its bungled suicide prevention strategy and its promised but non-existent family violence strategy.

“The real failure of the GN to date has been the failure to address the historic trauma in the society and the many ways that it plays out,” Hicks said.

“So we say in the book that there are days when it seems as though the GN simply lacks the capacity to address these problems — I mean capacity in the biggest sense, including political leadership.

“I don’t know what Nunavut’s going to be like in 20 years. What’s it going to be like in 20 years if the government doesn’t start dealing with stuff?”

You can order a copy from UBC Press [through this web page.](#)

Made in Nunavut: An Experiment in Decentralized Government
University of British Columbia Press, 2015, 392 pages.
Hardcover: ISBN 9780774831031, Dec. 1, 2015 — \$95
Paperback: ISBN 9780774831048, June 1, 2016 — \$34.95
Google Play Books: ISBN 9780774831062, Dec. 1, 2015 — \$21.46
Kobo: Available soon.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674how_nunavut_came_to_be_all_the_dreams_all_the_blunders/

Freezing dogs were in agony

Posted: Saturday, January 23, 2016 6:00 am | *Updated: 10:25 am, Sat Jan 23, 2016.*

By Bryan Meadows, CJ staff

Fort William First Nation leaders are working to solve an ongoing problem with dogs running at-large in the community.

The issue was brought to The Chronicle-Journal's attention by a woman who called the stray animal situation on the First Nation "just so sad.

"On Monday evening, the temperature was -37 C with the windchill. I saw about four stray dogs howling and trying to get into houses, scratching at the doors and barking all night," the woman said.

When she drove down a road the following morning, she noticed one of the dogs was curled up in the middle of the road "frozen" to the ground, and could barely lift its head.

"Poor things. It's freezing. There's just no need to leave your animals outside," the woman said. "Animal services needs to step up with catching the animals, which are more than willing to come to you, and bring them to a shelter."

The woman said that this issue has been brought to the attention of community leaders numerous times in the past.

Fort William First Nation Chief Peter Collins said Thursday that the band is working on the problem.

"It's a problem but not a major problem," he said, noting that a majority of the dogs running loose in the community belong to homeowners.

"People don't keep them on a leash, more often than not."

"We don't have an animal control officer," Collins said. "But we've been talking about (reaching) a memorandum of understanding with the local humane society" to deal with stray dogs and those running at-large.

"It's a work in process," Collins added.

Ian Bannon, the band's director of lands and properties, noted that the reserve is no different than any small community or municipality when it comes to the issue of animals running freely.

"We issue advisories to our members on . . . keeping their dogs on leashes, and (that) homeowners are responsible for their own pets on all aspects," he said.

In that regard, "we share the same issues when it comes to neutering or spaying the animals due to costs associated with it. We have not turned our heads to this matter . . . (and) have had discussions with the humane society on options to assist in this procedure.

"I must also add that in many cases we have had animals (both cats and dogs) dropped off in our community via drive-by and they are left to fend for themselves, ultimately to run at-large within the community."

Bannon added that it is important to note as well that animals found running freely could be coming from Chippewa Park Trailer Park, City Road Trailer Park and Mountain Road, all of which are not within the jurisdiction of Fort William First Nation.

The Thunder Bay & District Humane Society has launched a special spay and neuter clinic campaign called 'Take the Lead'. The aim of the 'Take the Lead' campaign is to raise \$200,000 to ensure that, with support from the community, a new Spay and Neuter Clinic will be opened to serve the District of Thunder Bay and surrounding communities of Northwestern Ontario including First Nations. To make a donation, go to: <http://tbdhs.ca/spay-and-neuter-clinic/>

Direct Link: http://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/local/freezing-dogs-were-in-agony/article_b87eea32-c18a-11e5-b66b-737a8b6a7e01.html

Invest in Northern infrastructure

HILDA BROOMFIELD LETEMPLIER

FIRST POSTED: SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2016 07:50 PM EST |

UPDATED: SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2016 07:54 PM EST



Stewart Redsky shares his joy after Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger, Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, City of Winnipeg mayor Brian Bowman, and Chief Erwin Redsky, Shoal Lake No.40 First Nation, announced an intergovernmental partnership that will benefit the First Nation by building a 24 km road from the community to the Trans Canada Highway, at the Manitoba Legislature in Winnipeg, Thursday, December 17, 2015. THE CANADIAN PRESS/John Woods

New spending on infrastructure can't come soon enough for Northern and Indigenous communities where infrastructure endowment is among the poorest in the country. The lack of adequate infrastructure in the North – including port facilities, runways, roads, bridges, telecommunications, housing, and energy infrastructure – creates what is arguably the most significant barrier to community and economic development in the region.

With this in mind, we welcome the federal government's stated commitment to increase infrastructure spending in Canada. In many communities in Canada's North, critical

infrastructure doesn't exist and community infrastructure, like housing, is severely overcrowded and in need of major repairs.

Last week the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board released its report entitled Recommendations on Northern Infrastructure to Support Economic Development. The recommendations urge the Government of Canada to support Northern infrastructure and economic development with increased investment, a North-specific approach to investment, and to support Northern community capacity by funding research and community planning.

The Board firmly believes, and our report clearly establishes, that investment in Northern infrastructure has the potential to result in significant positive benefits for Northern and Indigenous communities, but also Canadians across the country. Our background studies identified that each dollar spent on Northern economic infrastructure has the potential, if invested wisely, to generate \$11 of economic benefits for individuals and \$11 of fiscal benefits for governments.

Our report also shows that significant improvements in Northern public infrastructure would benefit not only individuals and governments, but also make the region more attractive for private investors. Settled land claims and local economic development corporations already create a strong base for economic development in the North.

The conclusions in our report are echoed by others. In a survey conducted by GE Canada which involved Northern business and community leaders, infrastructure was ranked by 70% of those surveyed as "the single most important criteria" for attracting investment and facilitating business development in remote communities. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, among others have also signaled a critical deficit in Canada's infrastructure.

An economically viable North with sound, healthy communities is good for Canada and Canadians. Indigenous people comprise the majority population in many places in the North and enhancements to transportation infrastructure, improved connectivity and improvements to energy infrastructure are critical for economic and social development in Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Our Aboriginal Economic Progress Report indicates that while some improvements have been made, much work remains. While some progress has been made between 2006 and 2011, Indigenous Peoples in Canada are currently not on track to achieving parity with non-Indigenous Canadians.

The vision of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board is for Indigenous Peoples to be economically self-sufficient and full participants in the Canadian economy. In order for this to happen, we need to create conditions where Indigenous economies can grow and businesses flourish. Infrastructure investment is at the centre of creating these conditions across Canada and especially in Northern and Indigenous communities.

Our report clearly demonstrates the value of investing in infrastructure. It shows that strategic investment in telecommunications, energy and transportation infrastructure can create a climate that supports business and economic development in the region and

lowers the costs of investing in other kinds of infrastructure – like housing and health care infrastructure. For example, the cost to build and maintain housing goes down exponentially when transportation networks create functional access to communities.

Bold investment in northern infrastructure is needed now in Northern Indigenous communities to close the gap. The NAEDB urges the federal government to invest in the North while ensuring that Indigenous Peoples are engaged as true partners in the planning, decision-making and business development opportunities along the way.

- Broomfield Letemplier is a member of the NAEDB and President/Chief Financial Officer of Pressure Pipe Steel Fabrication Ltd. The report is available at naedb-cndea.com

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2016/01/23/invest-in-northern-infrastructure>

Quebec coroner says smoke detector could have saved 5 Cree hunters

Mistissini hunters died from smoke inhalation in cabin fire last April

CBC News Posted: Jan 26, 2016 6:54 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 26, 2016 6:54 PM ET



Chiiwetin Coonishish was among the five hunters killed in a cabin fire in northern Quebec. (Facebook)

A Quebec coroner believes a smoke or carbon monoxide detector could have saved the lives of five Cree hunters who died during a cabin fire last year.

The five were found dead in a remote area 300 kilometres north of Chibougamau last April.

Chiiwetin Coonishish, Emmett Coonishish, Charlie Gunner, Kevin Loon and David Jimiken did not return from their hunting trip on March 30, 2015 as expected.

A search party found the men's remains amid the ruins of the cabin devastated by the fire two days later.

Coroner Luc Malouin said there was nothing left of the cabin where the men died to lead investigators to the cause of the fire, but there had been a woodstove and a propane oven in the dwelling.

"That's very, very dangerous," Malouin said.

The five died of asphyxia in their sleep, said Malouin. He said a smoke detector would have saved their lives.

"You just wake up and go out, and that's all," said Malouin. "You're alive."

Malouin said he's been promoting smoke detectors as lifesavers for the past three decades.

The Cree Trappers Association is working with the Crees' regional fire marshall to make smoke detectors and fire extinguishers mandatory in all hunting cabins.

"The smoke detectors would definitely have saved the lives of the five men," said Willie K. Gunner, the president of the association, adding the move is "for the benefit of our community, for other people."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/mistissini-cree-hunters-coroner-report-1.3420937>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Iqaluit thief cuts museum phone line, steals \$10K worth of art

**Burglar removed layer of Plexiglas over window at the Nunatta
Sunakkutaangit Museum**

CBC News Posted: Jan 22, 2016 9:05 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 22, 2016 9:05 AM CT



Staff at the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum in Iqaluit are cleaning up after someone broke into the building Wednesday and stole \$10,000 worth of Inuit art. (CBC)

Someone broke into Iqaluit's museum Wednesday night and stole \$10,000 worth of Inuit art after cutting the building's phone lines and stopping the alarm from sounding.

The person or persons involved also removed a layer of Plexiglas over the window at the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum before smashing their way into the building.

"It was totally surprising for me," said Gyu Oh, the museum's manager.

"I don't even know how anybody has that kind of plan to be able to do that. I mean I understand somebody breaking a window and breaking in somewhere or coming through the open door, but doing that seemed kinda planned."

Just over a week ago someone tried to break in through the same window but was stopped by the museum's Plexiglas cover. Oh said her phone service was also cut that day.

"Last time when the phone line was out I didn't even know it was connected with the broken window outside."

Oh said the thieves made off with at least four large carvings, a carved narwhal tusk, the museum's cash register and a camera.

The RCMP are investigating.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/iqaluit-museum-break-in-inuit-art-1.3415221>

La Loche, Sask., shooting leaves 4 dead, others wounded, RCMP say

'This is every parent's worst nightmare,' Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 22, 2016 3:08 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 23, 2016 7:47 AM CT



A small community in northern Saskatchewan is reeling after shootings at two locations — including a high school — left four people dead.

Several others were wounded in the violence in La Loche, which has a population of about 3,000 people.



Witnesses say a shooter approached the La Loche Community School, firing shots both outside and inside the building. (Canadian Press)

"I feel like I'm in a nightmare and I want to wake up," said Diane Janvier, who told CBC News that one of the victims was her niece.

RCMP confirmed the deaths during a news conference Friday night in Regina, and added that a male suspect was in custody and the immediate threat was over.

"There's no risk to public safety at this time," Chief Supt. Maureen Levy, a senior officer for the Saskatchewan RCMP, said, adding she could not provide details on the number of people wounded or the nature of their injuries.

"This is truly a tragedy."

Community members held vigils Friday night outside the school and at a local church to mourn for the victims.

"There were candles all over the parking lot of the school," CBC's Devin Heroux said.

2 shooting locations

Levy said two locations were at the centre of their investigation, including the high school and a place on the 300 block of Dene Crescent in La Loche.



A makeshift memorial was left in front of the community high school after Friday's shooting. (Matthew Kruchak/CBC)

Teddy Clark, chief of the neighbouring Clearwater River Dene Nation received a text message from his daughter about the shootings while he was at a meeting in Saskatoon.

The message read, "Dad there's been a shooting at the school."

"I immediately called her," he said and, after learning she was at home, told her to stay there.



Several people from the community gathered Friday night for one of the candlelight vigils. (Submitted by Nathan Janvier)

Earlier Friday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he had been told five died in the shooting.

Levy told reporters in Regina that the investigation was in its early stages and she was not ready to disclose much more information.

"I cannot release the identity of the victims as the investigation is ongoing," she said. "In addition to those confirmed deceased, a number of people have been injured. We do not have information about the type or extent of their injuries."

Shots fired at school

According to eyewitnesses, a shooter approached the school (with grades 7 to 12) and shots were fired outside and inside the building.

"I ran outside the school," Noel Desjarlais, a Grade 10 student at the school, told CBC News. "There was lots of screaming. There was about six, seven shots before I got outside. I believe there was more shots by the time I did get out."



RCMP said a male suspect was apprehended at 1:47 p.m. CST Friday, outside the school. (Canadian Press)

"Myself I'm fine," he said. "I ended up running and telling people [to] get out the doors."

RCMP in Saskatchewan said they were called about "an active shooter" at 1 p.m. CST and said they had a suspect in custody 45 minutes later.

The suspect was arrested outside the school and a firearm was seized. Another school in the community, for elementary grades, was also put under a lockdown. Levy said the lockdown had been lifted.

"We have no idea what happened and how it happened and why it happened," Kevin Janvier, acting mayor of La Loche, said Friday afternoon. "It's something we should never hear of happening and it's happened today."

He said people were gathering at the community hall where grief counselling would be available.

"Obviously this is every parent's worst nightmare," Trudeau said Friday in a brief statement from Davos, Switzerland. "The community is reeling and all of us across this country, [our] hearts are going out to the families and to the whole community."



An image from a video, posted to Facebook by a student, from outside the La Loche community school Friday afternoon. (Facebook)

Trudeau also thanked first responders who reacted "quickly and bravely" in what he called a "tragic and terrible day."

Saskatchewan's air ambulance system was dispatched to La Loche, which is about 500 kilometres northwest of Prince Albert, Sask., around 1:35 p.m. CST.

'Shock and disbelief'

"We are in shock and in disbelief upon hearing about the tragedy in La Loche," Bobby Cameron, chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, said in a statement

Friday. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families, the children, the students and the entire community of La Loche in the wake of today's horrible incident."

Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall also issued a statement Friday.

"Words cannot express my shock and sorrow at the horrific events today in La Loche," Wall said. "My thoughts and prayers are with all the victims, their families and friends and all the people of the community. Thank you to the RCMP and all the emergency personnel who responded quickly to the shootings. Saskatchewan Education and Social Services will be available to provide all necessary crisis support and counselling services to the school and the community."

NDP MP Georgina Jolibois, who has served as mayor of the community in the past, said she was "shocked and saddened" by the shootings.



This is an interior view of the community school in La Loche, taken in 2015. (Submitted by Megan Howse)

"The shooting hits close to home for me as my family members attend the school," she said in a statement.

She added that the community "has faced adversity in the past and we will persevere," adding that her thoughts and prayers were with everyone affected by the shooting.

"This has a dramatic, negative effect on absolutely everyone," Buckley Belanger, who represents the area in the provincial legislature, said Friday. "But as many people tell us in our community, we have to be resilient."



La Loche is a Dene community of about 3,000 in Saskatchewan's north. (CBC)

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/la-loche-community-school-lock-down-jan22-1.3416143>

First Nations student deaths inquest: Father 'shocked' by allegations of murder

**Three people testified they heard Stephen Cole confess to killing
Jordan Wabasse in Thunder Bay**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 22, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 22, 2016 7:00 AM ET



Derek and Bernice Jacob say their son, Jordan Wabasse, was an out-going boy who enjoyed going to school and loved hockey. Wabasse died in 2011 while attending school in Thunder Bay, Ont. (Jody Porter/CBC)

The father of a First Nations teenager who died in Thunder Bay, Ont., says he was "shocked" by allegations at an inquest this week that his son was murdered.

Jordan Wabasse, from Webequie First Nation, disappeared on February 7, 2011 after coming to Thunder Bay to attend high school. His body was found in the Kaministiquia River on May 10, 2011. He was 15 years old.

His father, Derek Jacob, said some of the testimony at the inquest into his son's death this week has been so upsetting he had to leave the court room.

"I left, just for a walk," he said. "Like I was totally shocked to hear these kids telling, testifying on these things."

On Wednesday two people testified that Stephen Cole told them he had killed Wabasse.



Jordan Wabasse from Webequie First Nation died while attending school in Thunder Bay. He was 15. (CBC)

"He told me he killed a kid and pushed him off the bridge for a bag of weed," Cole's half-brother Kirk Jedyk told the inquest.

Cole denied the allegations when he was called to testify.

"Do you think I would be walking around telling all these people this — it wouldn't be a very smart thing to do," he told the inquest on Wednesday.

Cole's former girlfriend testified on Thursday that he also confessed to her, saying he pushed "the Aboriginal guy" in the river.

But Arianna Rollin said she didn't believe Cole because "he was just doing it to be cool."

Jacob said the testimony was "shocking, because I never heard these things."

The lead investigator in the case is scheduled to testify at the inquest on Friday.

Another Thunder Bay police officer testified earlier that the investigation into Wabasse's death remains open, but is "stagnant" because there have been no new leads.

"I hope they continue investigating this thing," Jacob said.

Wabasse is **one of seven First Nations students from remote communities whose deaths** in Thunder Bay are being examined by the inquest.

The bodies of five of them — all teenaged boys — were found in rivers running through the city.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-father-shocked-by-allegations-of-murder-1.3414512>

Aboriginal Domestic Violence Rates Much Higher Than For Non-Indigenous People: StatsCan

The Huffington Post Canada | By **Jesse Ferreras**

Posted: 01/22/2016 5:25 pm EST Updated: 01/22/2016 5:59 pm EST

Indigenous people are much more likely to experience domestic violence than non-aboriginals, suggests a new report from Statistics Canada.

The report, titled "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014" was released Thursday.

It shows that aboriginal respondents to the 2014 General Social Survey (GSS) reported similar rates of domestic violence as they did five years prior, while incidents involving non-indigenous people appear to have fallen across the provinces.



Gertrude Pierre signs a pledge to keep aboriginal women safe following a signing of a memorandum of understanding in North Vancouver, B.C. on June 13, 2014. Pierre's niece Cheryl Ann Joe was murdered in Jan. 1992 and was remembered by her family as First Nations groups pledged to end violence against aboriginal women and girls. (Photo: Jonathan Hayward/CP)

The 2014 GSS focused on victimization, and it spoke to Canadians aged 15 years or older in the provinces and the territories. Statistics Canada spoke with 33,127 people by telephone and had them answer questions online.

Nine per cent of indigenous respondents said they were victims of spousal violence in 2014, compared to 10 per cent in 2009.

That's more than double the number of non-indigenous people (four per cent) who reported family violence in those years.

At 10 per cent, indigenous women were more than three times more likely to report abuse than non-aboriginal women (three per cent).

A similar gap was apparent when looking at the percentage of people who said they experienced spousal abuse throughout their lives, with a decreased percentage in non-indigenous people (6 per cent in 2009 to 4 per cent in 2014), but only a one per cent decrease for indigenous people, from 10 per cent to 9 per cent.

Forty per cent of people who identified as indigenous said they were physically or sexually abused as children. That was far more than the 29 per cent of non-indigenous people who reported family violence.

Overall, reports of family violence in the GSS, appear to be falling when accounting for all Canadians.

The 2014 GSS showed four per cent of people reporting they had been victims of abuse, compared to seven per cent a decade prior.

The percentage of spouses who experienced domestic violence fell in every province except for Prince Edward Island over the same time period, according to the report.

Statistics for the territories were not included.

Statistics Canada's report also showed women and men reporting equal levels of domestic violence, at four per cent each, the report said.

But that statistic was challenged by Lesley Lindberg, executive director of Winnipeg's Willow Place shelter for women and children.

"We are not seeing men reporting they are victims of spousal violence with the same frequency as women," she told CBC News.

"It is nowhere close to 50-50. Of the numbers calling the provincial crisis number, 6,000 calls, only 200 were forwarded to the men's resource centre."

The report also showed that women experienced more serious forms of violence, such as beatings, choking and sexual assault. They were twice as likely to report this kind of violence as men were, although males reported higher rates of being bitten, hit or kicked.

Nearly half of domestic violence victims said they were abused once between 2009 and 2014, and more than a third (35 per cent) said they experienced violence between two and 10 times.

Approximately 20 per cent of victims said they experienced domestic violence more than 10 times.

Police were not notified about the violence in 70 per cent of cases.



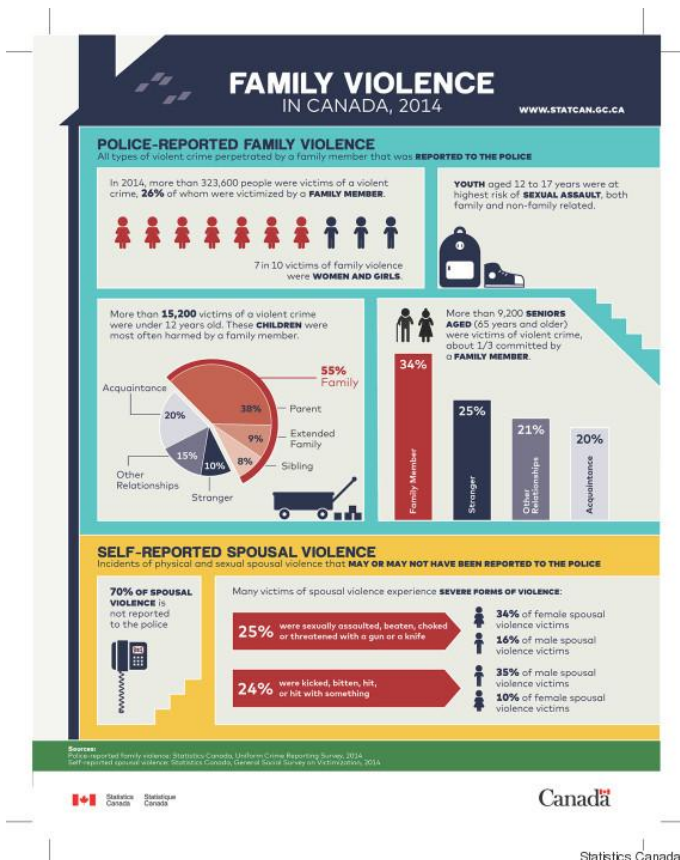
Cee Jai Julian, left, sings at the People's Gathering for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls at Carleton University in Ottawa on Feb. 27, 2015. (Photo: Patrick Doyle/CP)

The report comes as the federal government prepares to hold an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

A pre-inquiry phase involving consultations with victims' families is expected to last until the summer, CTV News reported.

Here is the Statistics Canada report, visualized as an infographic:

Click for full size.



The GSS is a series of cross-sectional surveys that cover one topic at a time. It aims to "gather data on social trends in order to monitor changes in the living conditions and well being of Canadians," according to Statistics Canada.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/22/aboriginal-domestic-violence-statscan-2014_n_9044474.html

Stuck in 'halfway place,' remote Canadian community reels from shooting

VANCOUVER/WINNIPEG | BY JULIE GORDON AND ROD NICKEL, Sat Jan 23, 2016 5:18pm EST



The Dene high school campus of the La Loche Community School is seen in an undated photo.

The remote, northern Canadian community where a shooter killed four people and injured seven on Friday has long struggled under the weight of poverty, high suicide rates and disadvantages that most of the country can hardly imagine.

The isolated town of La Loche, in the western province of Saskatchewan, and its neighboring Clearwater River Dene Indian reserve, six hours away from the nearest airport, embody the dire prospects for Canada's Aboriginals, also known as First Nations.

Unemployment stands above 20 percent in the community, suicide and addiction rates are high, homes are overcrowded and family violence is rife in the community which is mostly Metis, a culture with French and Aboriginal roots.

"If you know about this deadly mix of hopelessness and abuse and violence, and drugs and alcohol abuse, and racism and poverty, really it's a perfect recipe for something like this to happen," said Mark Totten, who spent five years working with Aboriginal youth in Saskatchewan, and is now a criminal justice professor at Humber College in Toronto.

Canada's new Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in December promised a new "nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations peoples" and an inquiry into the high rates of missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

Trudeau, 44, was speaking after a report found the forcible separation of Aboriginal children from their families amounted to cultural genocide.

La Loche, set beside a lake and boreal forest at the end of a highway from southern Saskatchewan, one of Canada's wealthiest provinces due to its reserves of crude oil, potash and uranium, has a checkered history of violence.

In 2010, a man was shot dead in broad daylight across the street from the local police detachment. A year later, a mob torched a police truck and attacked two police officers.

"Things are getting kind of bad," said Sylvia Piche, 53, who grew up in La Loche before moving to Clearwater. "I'm afraid to even walk at night."

Mass shootings are rare, however, even in Canada's most desperate corners.

Canadian police said on Saturday that a 17-year-old man has been charged with four counts of first degree murder, seven counts of attempted murder and unauthorized possession of a firearm. He cannot be named due to his age.

Police identified the victims as Dayne Fontaine, 17, and Drayden Fontaine, 13, teacher Adam Wood, 35, and teaching assistant Marie Janvier, 21.

"My heart was shattered, the community was shattered," said acting mayor Kevin Janvier, who was inaccurately reported to have lost his daughter in the school shooting.

In La Loche, which has a population of 2,600, 18 people committed suicide over a four-and-a-half year span to January 2010, the StarPhoenix newspaper said last year. It said the

annual suicide rate in the regional health district is the highest in the province.

"There's not much future after you graduate," said Raymond Dauvin, a long-time La Loche resident. "You have to leave town to work. And it's difficult, because if you leave town you're in an environment of other people who don't speak Dene. In a way, it's your nation up here."

The tragedy will also raise questions about gun access in Aboriginal communities. While all firearms must be registered in Canada, the process is easier for Aboriginals who use shotguns for traditional hunting and youth under 12 can obtain access.

"Having a shotgun is a very important thing, because if you're supporting your family with moose, maybe beaver pelts, deer, then you need guns," said Humber's Totten.

Still, Aboriginal communities will ask hard questions about gun security after the shooting, said Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Bobby Cameron, who represents more than 70 Indian bands in the province.

In the meantime, La Loche residents are caught between traditional and modern worlds, giving rise to "unimaginable" social problems that are symptoms of the loss of identity, said Ken Coates, director of the University of Saskatchewan's northern development center.

Elders who provide the last link to traditional Aboriginal life are dying, while television channels are easily available, offering a teasing window into an affluent southern world, he said.

"You're stuck in this halfway place, which creates this odd (question) of, 'Am I a northern person? Yes. But am I a Canadian in a full sense?'" Coates said.

Direct Link: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-canada-shooting-idUSKCN0V10VL>

Canada gov't: worried about aboriginal towns in wake of shooting

In the wake of a school shooting in a remote aboriginal town, the federal government admits that improving conditions in impoverished First Nations communities is "a huge challenge."

By David Ljunggren, Reuters JANUARY 24, 2016



OTTAWA — Canada's government, grappling with a fatal attack in a remote aboriginal town, is very concerned about the "tragic and alarming" conditions in other indigenous communities, a top official said on Sunday.

A 17-year-old boy was due to appear in court on Monday, charged with four counts of murder after Friday's deadly incident in La Loche, an impoverished town in the western province of Saskatchewan.

Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took power last year promising to tackle high levels of poverty, crime, bad housing and poor health among aboriginals, who make up 4 percent of the country's population of 36 million.

House leader Dominic LeBlanc, a key Trudeau ally from the Atlantic province of New Brunswick, told reporters Ottawa would work with aboriginal leaders "to deal with some of the tragic and alarming social indicators in many of these communities."

He added: "I have some of these communities ... in New Brunswick. I worry about them a great deal, and our whole government does."

Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall and federal Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale arrived in La Loche on Sunday, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. reported.

Mr. Trudeau last month promised a new "nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations peoples" - a term that aboriginals use to refer to themselves - and said he would increase funding for indigenous communities.

Trudeau's chief spokeswoman said he had no plans to address the media on Sunday.

Mr. LeBlanc said improving the lot of the First Nations was "a huge challenge."

Robert Nault, who served as aboriginal affairs minister under the Liberals from 1999 to 2003, said real change would take a long time.

"So we're going to have to be patient and start ... working on the lack of infrastructure, the lack of housing, to change our relationship as it relates to education and healthcare," he said in an interview. "It is a slow process."

Direct Link: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2016/0124/Canada-gov-t-worried-about-aboriginal-towns-in-wake-of-shooting>

Police charge 17-year-old boy in Canada after 4 shot dead

ROB GILLIES

January 24, 2016



Four people are dead and at least two injured after a gunman opened fire at a high school in Canada, reports Natalie

TORONTO (AP) — A 17-year-old boy was charged with four counts of first-degree murder and seven counts of attempted murder in a mass shooting at a school and home in a remote aboriginal community in western Canada, officials said.

Police said the male suspect can't be named under Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act. Royal Canadian Mounted Police Supt. Grant St. Germaine said nine people were shot in the school, including a female teacher's aide who died at the scene and a male teacher who died in a hospital. He said seven people wounded in Friday's shooting at the school are hospitalized.

Two brothers, 17-year-old Dayne Fountaine and 13-year-old Drayden, were shot and killed in a home before the gunman headed to the grade 7-12 La Loche Community School, police said. Police responded to a call of shots fired at the school shortly after the lunch hour.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commanding Officer Brenda Butterworth-Carr said when officers arrived at the school they saw the front door had been shot open. They entered the school, spotted the suspect and gave chase before apprehending him. He is due in court next week.

Police said Saturday that they were not aware of a motive and declined to say what type of gun was used.

The school is in the remote Dene aboriginal community of La Loche in Saskatchewan Province. La Loche is a community of less than 3,000 where just about everybody knows everybody else.

"This is a significant event for Canada," St. Germaine said. "It's a huge impact on the community of La Loche. It's a part of changing times. We are seeing more violence."

Residents lighted candles and placed flowers at a makeshift memorial outside the school.

Shootings at schools or on university campuses are rare in Canada. However, the country's bloodiest mass shooting occurred on Dec. 6, 1989, at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique, when Marc Lepine entered a college classroom at the engineering school, separated the men from the women, told the men to leave and opened fire, killing 14 women before killing himself.

The educational assistant killed at the Saskatchewan school was identified as 21-year-old Marie Janvier. Deegan Park, her boyfriend of three years, said he would have given up the rest of his life just to spend another year with her.

"I grew up not a good guy, but she turned me right," Park told The Associated Press. "She was that much of a great person to turn me right from all the wrongdoings I used to do. ... She was a fantastic person."

"I loved her, I really did," said Park, who remembered her smile and how she would blush when she was happy.

Kevin Janvier said his daughter was an only child. "I'm just so sad," he said.

Ashton Lemaigre, a teacher at the school and friend of Marie Janvier, said she worked as a teacher's aide in his classroom. He said she was kind and patient with children and planned to get her teaching degree someday.

"The kids loved having her around," Lemaigre said. "They would just come running to her. And she was just a friend to everybody."

A second victim was identified as 35-year-old Adam Wood, a new teacher at the school. His family in Ontario issued a statement describing him as an adventurer with a passion for life who made people laugh until their stomachs hurt.

"Adam had just begun his teaching career in La Loche last September and was enjoying his time," his family said. "He was always up for a good challenge and lived each day joyously."

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who was attending the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, called it "every parent's worst nightmare."

A student who was just returning from lunch when the shots were fired Friday said his friends ran past him urging him to get out.

"Run, bro, run!" Noel Desjarlais-Thomas, 16, recalled his friends saying to him as they fled La Loche's junior and senior high school. "There's a shotgun! There's a shotgun! They were just yelling to me. And then I was hearing those shots too, so of course I started running."

The RCMP said the first reports of shots being fired at the school came in around 1 p.m. Friday, and parents and residents were warned to stay away. Witnesses said some students hid in gym dressing rooms for hours. A nearby elementary school was also placed on lockdown as a precaution.

Direct Link: <http://news.yahoo.com/police-charge-17-old-boy-canada-4-shot-131910960.html>

Canadian MP says La Loche shooting shows 'tragic' plight of First Nations

Dominic LeBlanc affirms Justin Trudeau's government is determined to tackle the 'alarming social indicators' that plague aboriginal communities



A man holds a rosary outside the La Loche community school.

Monday 25 January 2016 04.04 GMTLast modified on Monday 25 January 201604.06 GMT

Canada's government, grappling with a fatal attack in a remote aboriginal town, is very concerned about the "tragic and alarming" conditions in other indigenous communities, a top official has said.

A 17-year-old boy was due to appear in court on Monday charged with four counts of murder after Friday's deadly incident in La Loche, an impoverished town in the western province of Saskatchewan.

Liberal party leader Justin Trudeau took power as prime minister in 2015 promising to tackle high levels of poverty, crime, bad housing and poor health among aboriginal people, who make up 4% of the country's population of 36 million.

House leader Dominic LeBlanc, a key Trudeau ally from the Atlantic province of New Brunswick, told reporters Ottawa would work with aboriginal leaders "to deal with some of the tragic and alarming social indicators in many of these communities".

He added: "I have some of these communities ... in New Brunswick. I worry about them a great deal, and our whole government does."

Hundreds of people in La Loche, a community of 2,600, attended a church service on Sunday in memory of the four victims.

Local Roman Catholic Archbishop Murray Chatlain said recent cuts to school and other services could have played a role in the tragedy, the Saskatoon StarPhoenix reported.

"I think those things need to be revisited. Our cuts sometimes end up costing more," the paper quoted him as saying.

Trudeau last month promised a new "nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations peoples" and said he would increase funding for indigenous communities.

The head of a group representing 65,000 aboriginal people in northern Manitoba, which borders Saskatchewan, said the tragedy showed the need for major investments in mental health, education and the economy.

"I'm surprised it doesn't happen more – not to this level, of course – given the despair we see," Sheila North Wilson said in a phone interview.

LeBlanc said improving the lot of the First Nations was "a huge challenge".

Robert Nault, who served as aboriginal affairs minister under the Liberals from 1999 to 2003, said real change would take a long time.

"So we're going to have to be patient and start ... working on the lack of infrastructure, the lack of housing, to change our relationship as it relates to education and healthcare," he said in an interview. "It is a slow process."

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/25/canadian-mp-says-la-loche-shooting-shows-tragic-plight-of-first-nations>

Canada shooting suspect in court as First Nations call for share in prosperity

Top indigenous leader laments ‘travesty of this quality of life’ as 17-year-old from La Loche is indicted on charges of killing two brothers and two teachers



A fire burns to thaw the frozen ground for the grave of one of the La Loche shooting victims. Photograph: Jonathan Hayward/AP

Tuesday 26 January 2016 00.50 GMTLast modified on Tuesday 26 January 201609.53 GMT

A Canadian high school student has appeared in court over the murder of two teenage brothers and two teachers in the remote indigenous community of La Loche in Saskatchewan.

The 17-year-old, who cannot be identified under Canadian law, was indicted on four counts of first-degree or premeditated murder and seven counts of attempted murder, as well as a weapons charge.

He is scheduled to return to court on 22 February.

The gun attack on Friday traumatised the 3,000 inhabitants of the small lakeside village of La Loche, in the western prairie province of Saskatchewan.

Shock also spread across the nation. Unlike in the neighbouring United States, mass shootings are rare in Canada, where firearms are more regulated.

Two brothers – Drayden and Dayne Fontaine, aged 13 and 17 – were killed at their home, then two teachers, 21-year-old Marie Janvier and 35-year-old Adam Wood, were shot dead at a school. Seven other people were critically injured, according to police.

On Sunday hundreds attended a church service in memory of the victims, while leaders expressed their grief.

Town mayor Kevin Janvier and local member of parliament Georgina Jolibois suggested tearing down the school where the shooting took place “because of the trauma”.

La Loche has long struggled with high rates of addiction, suicide and poverty. In a region that actually has one of the country’s lowest unemployment rates (5.5% versus 7.1% across Canada), in La Loche almost roughly every second adult is unemployed. The suicide rate is three times higher than in the rest of the province.

The Canadian government’s House of Commons leader, Dominic LeBlanc, drew attention to the bleak living conditions in La Loche. “The government has to look at a whole series of measures to improve community safety,” he said.

Canada’s recently elected prime minister, Justin Trudeau, has promised to ratify a UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. Canada and three other countries – Australia, the United States and New Zealand – were the only nations to vote against the UN indigenous text in 2007.

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, the main political group representing the country’s aboriginal people, said that in the wake of the La Loche shootings he would put pressure on Trudeau to deliver on election promises to his community.

“It’s a travesty that this quality of life persists in this great, rich country called Canada,” Bellegarde said on Monday. “Everyone’s focused on La Loche now, saying this is not acceptable in 2016.”

“Words are easy to say ... there has to be these investments now to get us to the same starting line as everyone else,” Bellegarde said. “We’ve got 10, 12, 13 people living in a two-bedroom house. That affects everything.”

Bellegarde, who voted for the first time in the October election that vaulted Trudeau to power, said he believed the new prime minister “gets it”, referring to the need to improve living standards.

Less than half of Canada’s aboriginal people have typically voted in elections because many do not recognise the government’s sovereignty.

But anger over disproportionately high rates of violence against indigenous women, dire living conditions as well as resource development and environmental issues prompted Bellegarde to publicly urge aboriginal people to cast ballots last year.

In July 2015 the UN Human Rights Committee in a report blamed Ottawa for many of the inequalities affecting indigenous people and urged the government to do more to support natives.

As part of an ongoing rapprochement between the federal government and Canada's more than 600 indigenous tribes, Trudeau has announced an inquiry into why 1,200 indigenous women were murdered or have gone missing over the past three decades – an investigation long demanded by aboriginal leaders and activists.

With Agence France-Presse and Reuters

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/26/canada-shooting-suspect-in-court-as-first-nations-call-for-share-in-prosperity>

Canada's School Shooting Highlights Systemic Poverty and Racism in First Nations Communities

By [Manisha Krishnan](#)

Staff Writer, January 26, 2016

Residents in La Loche console one another. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jason Franson

On a morning in mid-October, a young man living in the Bridge River First Nations near Lillooet, British Columbia, entered his band council's office carrying a hammer and **violently assaulted ten people** inside. The perpetrator, David James, 22, died at the scene, reportedly of cardiac arrest. His attack sent ten people to the hospital, including two who were placed in critical care.

Amidst cries of horror and shock, there was another reaction: resignation. James was extremely poor; band staffers, the same ones he beat with a hammer, had been trying to help him find a way to pay rent and find housing. "He had complex social and health needs that our staff did not have the resources or training to adequately respond to," said Xwisten Band Chief Susan James, at the time, while Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson remarked the same thing could happen in any band in the country.

In a way, it has.

The particulars of the **shooting** that took in **La Loche, Saskatchewan** Friday are much more sensational, of course. A 17-year-old boy, who had reportedly been **bullied mercilessly about his appearance**, shot dead brothers Dayne and Drayden Fontaine at a residence, before continuing his rampage at La Roche Community School, where he killed teacher Adam Wood and teacher's aide Marie Janvier. The teen, who is a minor and has not been named, has been charged with four counts of first-degree murder and seven counts of attempted murder.

It's being described as one of the worst school shootings in Canadian history, which is technically true, and explains why the story has dominated headlines across the country in recent days. But unlike similar situations that have occurred in the US, where the coverage quickly turns to conversations about gun control and extreme ideologies, the response here was markedly different. There seems to be an acknowledgment that there are larger systemic issues at play.

Those working on the ground say the underlying reason for the two outbursts, and an overarching problem with violence in indigenous communities, is poverty. They're not surprised by what happened in La Loche. And judging by the relatively muted reaction coming from the public, Canadians aren't either.

"All of these incidents of internal violence in First Nations communities are pretty much a function of the crushing poverty that our Aboriginal communities endure on a daily basis," Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, told VICE. "What has become abundantly clear in this case in La Loche is there are absolutely no services available, no fundamental basic services to the people there, save and except for the school itself."

Speaking to VICE News over the weekend, Kelly Patrick, former director of health for Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, said the high youth suicide rate in La Roche, coupled with a lack of mental health services and poverty, puts the shooting into "perspective."

"No one has been paying attention to this community," she said.

La Loche, a remote town of about 2,611 located 600 kilometers north of Saskatoon, is home to the First Clearwater River Dene Nation. Members of the community are comprised of residential school survivors, many of whom experienced physical, sexual, and verbal abuse at the hands of the government. **Suicide rates** in the general area are three times the province's average—43.4 deaths per 100,000 people compared to 12.7 deaths per 100,000 people, respectively—according to the Keewatin Yatthe Regional Health Authority .

Despite Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall pointing to a provincially-sanctioned suicide prevention program, the fact remains La Loche lacks even a recreational center to engage its young people.

"We just went through a dark, ten-year-long nightmare under the Harper regime where programs and services were harshly cut back and I think this is the consequence of it," Phillip said.

He said his own hometown, British Columbia's Penticton Indian Reserve, suffered a triple homicide in 2004, in which a young man, apparently in the grips of a drug- and booze-fueled psychosis, shot three people at a party before slitting his own throat. The killer, Dustin Paul, who was 24 years old at the time, was a drug dealer suffering from depression—his own father had been murdered in 1999.

"When you have circumstances like that that are a function of and a consequence of structural poverty, you're going to have these kinds of situations develop," Phillip said. Usually, these "situations" quickly vanish from the public's memory, if they ever register in the first place, he added, a result of systemic racism. "People shrug their shoulders and say, 'What would you expect, it's a First Nations community?'"

Had the La Loche shooting taken place in a white community, or one of Canada's urban centers, "governments would move heaven and earth to make investments to ensure it never happened again," he said.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said his government will prioritize reconciliation with Canada's indigenous people. "Our hearts and prayers are also with those injured in the attack, that they may have a full and speedy recovery," he said after Friday's shooting.

But unless his government can start providing even the most basic of services to those desperately in need, he'll likely be repeating those words in the future.

Direct Link: <http://www.vice.com/read/la-loche-school-shooting-highlights-systemic-poverty-and-racism-first-nations-leaders>

Remote First Nation communities have been facing 'tragedy' long before La Loche: chief

By Nick Logan, World Reporter/Global National Web Producer Global News, January 25, 2016 6:04 pm



The tiny community of La Loche, Sask. is still reeling from the horrific murders of four people in a shooting spree last Friday.

But the mass shooting in the remote community has only brought people's attention to its plight and underlying social problems because the headlines are reminiscent of repeated stories out of the United States, where mass shootings now occur on a regular basis, says

an Ontario First Nation chief who knows all about the problems faced by isolated indigenous communities.

“There’s a mundane tragedy that has been happening in our communities for quite some time,” Chief Isadore Day, Ontario Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations, said of the poverty and lack of opportunity in northern First Nation communities.

He said there’s so little promise of a prosperous future in some northern First Nation communities that no parent from a non-indigenous community would ever consider sending their child there for a better life.

“It’s because First Nations are cut off, because of the funding cuts, because of the lack of investment,” Day said.

He says it’s time for that to change.

“This country has going to have to come to grips with the fact that we are in the 21st century and he [have] First Nation communities throughout the North that aren’t going to leave,” he said. “Perhaps it’s time to look at creating the proper transportation networks that are going to allow people mobility, access and to lower the cost of living in the North.”

La Loche is more than 600 kilometres northwest of Saskatoon. While it’s closer, geographically, to Fort McMurray, Alta., it’s only easily accessible via an ice road in winter. Even the courthouse where the 17-year-old shooting suspect appeared Monday is a four-hour drive south.

It’s size and isolation doesn’t leave a lot of opportunity for its population.

In the village of roughly 2,600 people, more than 2,400 identify as First Nation or Métis. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, 78 per cent (1,385 of 1,770) of the people over the age of 15 have no post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree. The official unemployment rate is 22.3.

The median income in La Loche in 2011 was \$14,497, compared to \$77,300 for Saskatchewan and \$72,240 nationally.

The homes there are overcrowded. As of 2011, there were only 630 private households. The number of people living in homes with more than one person per room is five times the average in Saskatchewan.

It’s statistics like these that contribute to problems like poor health, but it’s “one systemic issue that creates another,” Day said.

“One of the clear characteristics of the situation that First Nations are faced with is the issue of poverty,” he said noting that a lack of prosperity is fueling issues like a rise in rates of diabetes and youth pregnancy.

The suicide rate in northern indigenous communities is well above the national average.

While there were 15 suicides per 100,000 people nationally between 2008 and 2012, the rate in the Keewatin Yatthe Regional Health Authority — which includes La Loche — was more than triple that rate at 43.4 per 100,000.

Despite the figures, the community had been making progress, according to Leonard Montgrand, executive director of the La Loche Friendship Centre.

“This just sets us back. This really sets us back,” Montgrand told Global News. “Our suicide numbers were down. Our community issues were being addressed and our concerns were being met. But this has stepped us back considerably.”

Montgrand says the community needs help in the longer term, not just in the aftermath of last week’s tragedy. The frontline community workers who live there are already stretched thin. He fears this tragedy will have lasting impacts.

“We’ll see future impacts in this, in teacher retention [and] staff retention. We’re going to see heavier burdens on case workers,” he says. “This will not stop here.”

But, he’s hopeful the community will “persevere” as it has in the past. “We’ll move forward as we always have.”

With files from Reid Fiest in La Loche and Eric Sorensen in Toronto

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2476789/remote-first-nation-communities-have-been-facing-tragedy-long-before-la-loche-chief/>

Sask. First Nations schools to remember La Loche shootings with moment of silence

Flags will be lowered at schools Friday, moment of silence at 9 a.m. CST

CBC News Posted: Jan 27, 2016 10:13 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 27, 2016 3:30 PM CT



A memorial grows as more people leave flowers and candles in front of the La Loche Community School in La Loche, Sask. (Jason Franson/The Canadian Press)

Many of Saskatchewan's First Nation schools will be honouring the victims of the La Loche, Sask. school shooting with a moment of silence on Friday.



Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Bobby Cameron speaks to the media in Saskatoon. (Chanss Lagaden/CBC)

Flags will also be lowered to half-mast in a show of solidarity with the victims.

"It has affected each and every one of us at a different emotional level, so certainly prayers will help the community and the people in the north," said Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Bobby Cameron.

"The funerals are going to be taking place during the next little while so we need all the prayers that we could get [for] that healing journey," he added.

A 17-year-old male is facing four charges of first-degree murder and seven counts of attempted murder. An educational assistant and a teacher were killed at La Loche Community School and two young people were killed at another residence.

The moment of silence will take place 9 a.m. CST.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/first-nations-moment-silence-1.3421971>

Alberta woman slapped with drunk driving charges after crashing into a school bus with eight students on board

FIRST POSTED: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2016 05:10 PM MST |

UPDATED: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2016 05:16 PM MST



A 31-year-old woman has been charged with drunk driving after a collision with a school bus on the Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement last week.

Just before 9 a.m. on Jan. 20, Boyle RCMP were called to the crash on the settlement 175 km northeast of Edmonton.

Police say a white Oldsmobile Aurora failed to stop at an intersection and hit the school bus, sending it spinning into the ditch.

There were eight students on board, all ranging in age from five to 11 years old. Of the eight, two were taken to hospital with minor injuries. Police said at the time that alcohol was believed to be a factor.

Daisy Ladouceur, of Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement, is charged with impaired operation of a motor vehicle, impaired operation of a motor vehicle with a concentration of alcohol in the blood exceeding 80 milligrams, and public mischief. She was also issued four provincial traffic violation tickets, police said.

Ladouceur is to appear in Boyle Provincial Court on March 22 at 10:00 a.m.

Direct Link: <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2016/01/27/alberta-woman-slapped-with-drunk-driving-charges-after-crashing-into-a-school-bus-with-eight-students-on-board>

Teen in Mass Canada School Shooting Makes Court Appearance

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MEADOW LAKE, Saskatchewan — Jan. 25, 2016, 3:35 PM ET

The tall, thin 17-year-old wore an orange jumpsuit and had his legs and hands shackled as he was brought into a packed courtroom in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan — a community about 215 miles (350 kilometers) south of La Loche, where Friday's shooting took place.

A teacher and an aide were among those killed in the shooting. Seven people were injured.

Two brothers were also shot to death at a home prior to the school shooting.

The teen, who can't be named under Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act, is charged with four counts of first-degree murder and seven counts of attempted murder.

His next court appearance is Feb. 22.

Direct Link: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/teen-mass-canada-school-shooting-makes-court-appearance-36509878>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Ministry wants to stop Métis foster parents' petition to keep toddler in B.C.

BY LAURA KANE, THE CANADIAN PRESS JANUARY 23, 2016



VANCOUVER — A British Columbia foster mother fighting to adopt a two-year-old Métis girl says she fears the toddler will suffer lasting psychological harm if moved to Ontario to live with her older sisters.

The foster mother, who cannot be named, said she has always known of the B.C. Children's Ministry's plan to move the girl across the country to live with her siblings, who she has never met.

But she said the ministry "mishandled" the case and took too long to make the arrangements. In the meantime, the girl has bonded with the only family she has ever known, she said.

"A bond with a child that you've spent night and day with since she was born is very strong. It's an emotional bond that goes beyond words," she said in an interview.

She and her husband have filed a petition in B.C. Supreme Court to stop the government from moving the girl.

Their lawyer, Jack Hittrich, was in court this week to seek an interim order to keep the toddler in B.C. until the petition can be heard. Government lawyers filed an application to strike the petition on the grounds that it's an abuse of process.

A judge reserved her decision on both matters Friday afternoon and issued an order that the child not be removed from the foster parents' care until her decision is made.

The foster mother is Métis, while the caregivers in Ontario are not, raising questions about whether the child is better off with blood relatives or with a parent who shares her indigenous background.

"There are just day-to-day values that can be passed along that you can't learn from a book. It happens as you walk, as you talk, as you explore, as you sing and dance," said the foster mother.

She said she understands the need for the girl to have a relationship with her sisters, and would be happy to arrange visits with the Ontario family.

The biological family lives in B.C. and supports the toddler staying with the foster family, she added.

Hittrich told court Friday that moving the little girl to live with parents who are "strangers" to her, and then potentially moving her back if the petition is successful, would cause her emotional harm.

"There's overwhelming evidence before you that the disruption of the status quo, pending the full hearing of the current petition, is simply not in the best interests of this little girl," he said.

He said he has reports from psychologists who say the girl could suffer reactive attachment disorder, a psychological condition that affects one's ability to form long-term emotional bonds.

Government lawyers have said the evidence is hearsay.

Leah Greathead, representing the ministry, said a judge has already dismissed a similar petition filed by the foster parents and that asking a second judge to rule on the matter is "pure craziness."

She said the foster parents should have filed an appeal with the B.C. Court of Appeal.

Her co-counsel Tyna Mason told court the ministry has sole guardianship of the child and the decision to move her was made based on her best interests.

She pointed out that the foster parents' legal contract with the ministry states that the child can be removed from them permanently at any time.

Hittrich has said the best interests of the child should be determined in this case by a court, not by the ministry in a "unilateral decision."

The ministry has said it did not make the decision unilaterally but after consultation with a committee of Aboriginal representatives.

Direct Link:

<http://www.theprovince.com/life/ministry+wants+stop+metis+foster+parents+petition+keep+toddler/11668369/story.html>

First Nations leader slams B.C. government's 'PR move' on aboriginal child welfare

BOB MACKIN, SPECIAL TO THE PROVINCE 01.20.2016



Grand Chief Edward John was hired on a six-month, \$110,000 contract.

GERRY KAHRMANN GERRY KAHRMANN / PROVINCE

It was a “PR move” by Premier Christy Clark to name an ex-NDP cabinet minister as senior adviser on aboriginal child welfare last September, says a Fraser Valley First Nation chief.

“What was going through their heads?” asked Chief Ernie Crey of the Cheam First Nation.

“I could’ve told them this man is so busy. Do you realize how busy this man is?”

The B.C. government hired Grand Chief Edward John on a six-month, \$110,000 contract in early September to help address the issue of the disproportionate number of aboriginal minors in provincial care.

A news release said John would submit monthly reports to the minister, Stephanie Cadieux, “to inform of progress, (and) identify barriers and strategies to address them.”

However, a Freedom of Information request for the monthly reports came back with just a four-page project status report.

The earliest record of any activity was Oct. 20, when a letter signed by John and Cadieux was sent to all chiefs and nations. The document said that, as of Nov. 30, work continued to confirm John’s scope and develop a schedule.

John, a First Nations Summit executive, is in New York this week, at United Nations meetings on the preservation of indigenous languages, and did not respond to interview requests.

He was also in Paris in late November at climate change talks related to his role on the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

In addition to the Oct. 20 letter, the status report showed a dozen meetings from Oct. 29 to Nov. 25, listed under “Grand Chief Engagement Tracking,” with five First Nations and service groups, federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and B.C. NDP critic Doug Donaldson.

Donaldson said John helped Wet’suwet’en leaders obtain lists of children in provincial care that they had been unable to access from the ministry.

“That was a very positive outcome,” Donaldson said.

Ministry spokesman Bill Anderson said Cadieux is “supportive of the Grand Chief’s preferences regarding the format and frequency of his updates to both her and the deputy minister.”

A final report is expected at the end of his term. He will be compensated for the \$625-a-day contract upon receipt of his invoice and the term may be extended.

A statement from the First Nations Summit, attributed to John, said: “My total focus, in my capacity as special adviser to the Minister of MCFD on aboriginal child welfare, is

meeting with parents, families and the 203 B.C. First Nations communities, and their leaders, on permanency planning for each of the approximately 2,800 children in permanent care who come from their respective communities.”

Donaldson said the job is too big for one person with other commitments in such a short period of time.

“Ed John made it clear this was not going to be his full-time work during that six months,” Donaldson said.

“If this is the response by (Cadieux) and the Christy Clark government to the issue of such a horrific over-representation of aboriginal kids in care, it’s wholly inadequate.”

Aboriginals make up 60 per cent of children in care but only five per cent of B.C.’s population.

John, a lawyer and Tl’azt’en Nation hereditary chief from near Fort St. James, spent six months as the minister under Premier Ujjal Dosanjh before the May 2001 Liberal landslide.

John is married to ex-Musqueam Chief Wendy Grant-John. Her son from a previous marriage is Wade Grant, Clark’s special adviser on First Nations issues, who was paid \$72,353 last fiscal year.

Direct Link:

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/life/first+nations+leader+slams+move+government+aboriginal/11668002/story.html>

First aboriginal woman to head Canadian law school lives up to her name

Angelique EagleWoman, who will lead Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University, hopes to encourage young aboriginal people to pursue legal careers.



Angelique EagleWoman was told as a teenager she was destined to contribute to her people, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate tribe in South Dakota. Now, at a key moment for Canadian aboriginals, she is poised to make an impact north of the border.

By: May Warren Staff Reporter, Published on Sun Jan 24 2016

Angelique EagleWoman did not get her full name until she was 15.

In her Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate tribe, one of the Dakota Nations, children are given nicknames at birth and receive their formal names as teenagers, when their true character is revealed.

Gathered with her family at a sweat lodge ceremony on their South Dakota reserve, she was told she was to be called Wambdi Awanwicake WasteWin, which roughly translates to “Good EagleWoman.”

“I was told that it was an important name and it meant that I was supposed to do something with my life, to contribute to our people,” EagleWoman said over the phone from Moscow, Idaho, where she is a professor at the University of Idaho’s Native American Law Program.

The appellation was fitting for someone who would become the first aboriginal woman to head a law school in Canada.

EagleWoman has been appointed dean of the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Thunder Bay’s Lakehead University, which specializes in both aboriginal and natural resource law, as well as practising in rural communities. The faculty was founded in 2013.

At 46, EagleWoman has already had a distinguished career as a legal scholar and practising attorney. It all started, she said, at the age of 8.

At home in Topeka, Kansas, she watched on TV as her aunt and uncle emerged victorious on the steps of a local courthouse with a \$75,000 (U.S.) settlement from the sheriff’s department. Her uncle, an African-American, had sued after he was brutally beaten by police.

“And right then I thought, I want to be a lawyer,” EagleWoman recalled. “That’s what justice is.”

Her father stoked her interest by lending her books on the history of her people and she decided she wanted to be a lawyer for tribal nations. But that path didn’t come easy.

The oldest of four children, she split her time between Kansas and South Dakota. In South Dakota, she was a cheerleader at her tribal school and felt a greater sense of belonging than at the public high school in Topeka, where she was often the only aboriginal person in her advanced placement classes.

In law school at the University of North Dakota she was the only aboriginal person in the class of about 70.

“I went up and asked the professors questions on how does this relate to my community? And a lot of times they wouldn’t have answers.

“There were times where other students would make comments in class responding to a case in a book that had an aboriginal person in it and that would be upsetting to me.”

She was often taken as the spokesperson not just for her tribe, but for all aboriginals past and present, she recalled.

It’s something she doesn’t want other aboriginal students to face, and she’ll try to attract more of them at Lakehead.

At that institution, where students are required to take aboriginal law courses, EagleWoman will offer a valuable perspective, said Brian Stevenson, Lakehead University’s president and vice-chancellor.

“I think she’s going to be a very critical player at a time when here in the North we’re talking about how to deal with the Ring of Fire (a massive mineral deposit where mining is planned) and how to bring the aboriginal communities into that discussion,” he said.

“There is a wave across the country around dealing with a number of issues . . . to do with Aboriginal Peoples, and I think that we’re seeing more and more need for lawyers who are trained in those fields.”

The university “has been working very hard” to attract and admit aboriginal students, Stevenson said, particularly ones from isolated northern communities who might go back and practise there. Of the almost 60 students who will graduate this spring, about five are aboriginal and the school is hoping to increase that number, he added. Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day noted that EagleWoman’s appointment comes on the heels of the report by Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

“There are 94 calls for action and guaranteed that within those 94 calls for action, every one of those calls for action will have a need and a process that looks at the legal issues and impacts of some of those changes,” he said.

“There’s a very complex unravelling of existing laws and it’s going to take the lens and the value system of indigenous people to do that.”

The commission’s report called specifically for all Canadian law schools to institute a mandatory course on aboriginal people and the law.

EagleWoman will start her new role in May, and her husband and son will join her in June.

She said she’s looking forward to getting to know the community, enjoying the views of Lake Superior from the office, and serving as a role model, which she sees as a natural extension of being an educator.

“I believe that with this new law school there is a call going out to aboriginal communities . . . the doors to law school are open for you.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2016/01/24/first-aboriginal-woman-to-head-canadian-law-school-lives-up-to-her-name.html>

Law professor argues in UBC human rights complaint that Indigenous scholars shouldn't have to publish peer-reviewed research

TRISTIN HOPPER | January 24, 2016 | Last Updated: Jan 25 4:14 PM ET



Jenelle Schneider/Postmedia NewsLorna June McCue has alleged that peer-reviewed research is contrary to indigenous oral traditions and that UBC's research standard effectively discriminated against her "race, colour, ancestry, place of origin ... and sex."

By arguing that publishing peer-reviewed research conflicted with her role as an indigenous scholar, a former law professor has won her bid for a human rights tribunal hearing after losing her job at the University of British Columbia.

Lorna June McCue was denied tenure and ultimately dismissed after 11 years at the university in part because of her failure to submit a single piece of peer-reviewed research during that time.

McCue has alleged that peer-reviewed research is contrary to indigenous oral traditions and that UBC's research standard effectively discriminated against her "race, colour, ancestry, place of origin ... and sex."

The university's demand for her to publish in academic journals "would require her to be a round peg in a square hole," she told a preliminary tribunal hearing whose decision was published this month.

A round peg in a square hole

Lawyers for UBC, meanwhile, have argued that there is "nothing about indigeneity that prevents an indigenous person from having the capability of meeting the university's requirements."

A hereditary chief with the Ned'u'ten people of B.C.'s Lake Babine First Nation, McCue was formerly the director of First Nations Legal Studies at UBC.

The root of the complaint is UBC's informal requirement for professors to put their name to at least five academic papers before being considered for tenure.

"Although contributions to scholarship necessarily involve a combination of quality and quantity, generally we would expect to see five to six peer-reviewed, significant publications by the time you seek tenure," read a note to McCue from the dean of the Faculty of Law early in her career.

As UBC lawyers told a tribunal hearing, McCue "had not even commenced to meet" the standard when the university chose not to renew her contract in 2012.

McCue's position is that she adheres to an indigenous oral tradition that requires "significant compromise" for her to meet UBC's tenure and promotion standards.

Instead, she said, UBC should change their standards to account for "non-traditional scholarship" such as conference appearances, submissions to UN bodies and chapters in non-peer-reviewed books.

"This is work that does not fit conveniently into an academic time-table, but it is vital," she wrote in her CV.

They should value the teaching I am doing with my community
For instance, after a warning from administrators that she was not meeting her research quota she testified that she remembered thinking "I was doing teaching with my community – they should value the teaching I am doing with my community."

Tenured professors at UBC's school of journalism, she noted, have been promoted purely based on their professional achievements without publishing any peer-reviewed research.

McCue has been clear that there is no problem with systemic prejudice at UBC with regards to women or indigenous people. Rather, she has said the university is forcing Indigenous scholars to compromise their research by forcing it into non-oral forms.

"The essence of her position is that UBC's stance forces her, as an indigenous scholar, to be someone she is not," read a tribunal document.

Reckless with her career

Lawyers for UBC have countered that McCue was "reckless with her career" by repeatedly ignoring warnings to generate peer-reviewed research, a requirement that had been fulfilled by other indigenous scholars at the university.

In 2008, for instance, the university granted McCue eight months of teaching relief to focus solely on research. In that time, her only publication was an eight-page article included as a chapter in a non-peer-reviewed work.

UBC "does not and need not weigh unknown, unreported and unpublished work as heavily as peer-reviewed publication," read tribunal documents.

McCue notes in her CV that as an academic she has been “successful in collaborating with legal professionals that work with indigenous peoples.” However, she does not appear to have been a particularly popular professor among UBC students.

Her page of anonymous ratings at RateMyProfessors.com notes that McCue is pleasant outside the classroom and well-versed in aboriginal law, but students of a property law course complained that she reads verbatim from the text, repeatedly mixed up statute names and refused to admit mistakes.

“I had McCue for property law. I am pretty sure her failure to secure tenure had nothing to do with discrimination,” wrote a post on a forum for Canadian law students discussing McCue’s human rights complaint.

This month’s decision by the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal saw the dismissal of a no-evidence motion by UBC. The matter will now proceed to a full hearing.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/b-c-aboriginal-scholar-wins-bid-for-rights-hearing-after-shes-denied-tenure-in-part-over-lack-of-research>

Human rights tribunal to rule whether Canada discriminated against First Nations children on reserves

Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to determine if Canada has discriminated against children on reserves

By Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press Posted: Jan 25, 2016 11:19 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 26, 2016 6:19 AM ET



Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations and Family Caring Society, filed the complaint against Ottawa with the Canadian Human Rights Commission in February 2007, together with the Assembly of First Nations. (CBC)

Nine emotional years after she first challenged the federal government, First Nations child welfare advocate Cindy Blackstock is awaiting a ruling from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal that will determine if Canada has discriminated against children on reserves.

Blackstock is the executive director of The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, which filed the complaint with the Assembly of First Nations in 2007.

It argued the federal government failed to provide First Nations children the same level of welfare services that exist elsewhere, contrary to the Canadian Human Rights Act. It said this was discrimination on racial grounds.

A lot has changed during the course of this fight, Blackstock said.

"When I look back nine years and I think about what's changed in the world, to give it some context ... Obama became the first ... African-American U.S. president and Prime Minister Harper came and went," she said. "But most importantly, a whole generation grew up ... nine years is such a long time in a child's life."

It is extraordinary this case had to be filed in the first place, Blackstock said.

"Everyday I wake up and I ask myself, 'why did we have to bring the government of Canada to court to get them to treat First Nations children fairly?'"

Aboriginal child welfare was one of the central issues flagged in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which spent six years examining Canada's residential school legacy.

The report said governments, including at the federal level, need to reduce the number of aboriginal children taken into care by providing adequate resources for communities and child-welfare organizations.

It also called for child-welfare legislation that sets national standards. The Liberal government has committed to implementing all of the suggestions from the TRC, including an overhaul of child welfare, but Blackstock said she is keen to see action and noted the legally binding tribunal decision could take this out of the government's discretion.

Government retaliation

During the lengthy dispute, Blackstock suffered personal hardship. In 2013, then-privacy commissioner Jennifer Stoddart found that two government departments had overstepped in monitoring Blackstock and her personal Facebook account.

Stoddart said the Aboriginal Affairs Department and the Justice Department violated the spirit, if not the intent, of the Privacy Act by compiling information from Blackstock's personal social media page.

Both departments agreed to stop the monitoring, destroy personal information not directly linked to federal policy and set up a new system to ensure such surveillance did not happen again.

Last spring, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found that a government official "retaliated" against Blackstock and it awarded her \$20,000 for pain and suffering. She donated the money to children's charities.

That dispute centred on a December 2009 meeting at the ministerial headquarters in Gatineau, Que. where Blackstock said she was the only person barred from a gathering with the chiefs of Ontario.

First Nations children and their families helped her deal with these challenges, she said.

"Every time I would feel exhausted, and there were many, every time I would feel afraid, and there were some, given the surveillance and other things, every time I would just feel sad and want to give up, I'd just think about them," Blackstock said.

"They have been my constant source of inspiration, those children and their families across this country. I just knew that I could never give up."

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal is expected to publish its ruling online on Tuesday morning.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/advocates-await-first-nations-welfare-ruling-1.3418492>

Workshop offers potential hint of future for First Nations academics

Sixth annual Math and Science workshop sees Aboriginal researchers pass down their passion

January 25th, 2016 by [Quang Vinh](#)



In an interview with *The Peak* last week, Director of the Office for Aboriginal Peoples William Lindsay mentioned that there was a lack of Aboriginal academics at SFU.

However, there are initiatives in place to fix it for the future.

The sixth annual Aboriginal Students in Math and Science workshop was held on Jan. 14 at the IRMACS presentation studio building at the Burnaby campus under the guidance of professor Veselin Jungic. Over 70 First Nations students gathered to be inspired and indulge in their passion for math and science programs by four prominent math, biology, and astronomy presenters.

One of those researchers was Dr. Edward Doolittle from the First Nation University of Canada, whose aim was to help the students see that they actually have some news or values that they learned in high school can be used in something interesting.

“Ever since I have been in university at the age of 18, I have wondered about what I can do for the people,” said Dr. Doolittle. “I have been interested in math for most of my career. It seems that math is a major problem since not many Aboriginal students enjoy mathematics.”

For his part, he brought forward activities and education on string theory, which included making different shapes and figures from a string, realizing a string figure from a random drawing. String figures have been used throughout many culture groups and each of them contains cultural heritage from which students can learn.

Professor Veselin Jungic from SFU’s Department of Mathematics added that the meeting is also a way to promote scholarships, careers in math and science, and that the four eminent Aboriginal researchers invited to the meeting could serve as new role models.

The workshop reached a wider scope than just students at SFU, as some of the conference participants came from outside the Lower Mainland. Jungic says he is proud that SFU welcomes many Aboriginal students each year. Furthermore, according to SFU institutional research and planning, 7.6 per cent of SFU undergraduate students come from communities outside Metro Vancouver, and over 120 courses that focus on Aboriginal knowledge and issues are offered at SFU as stated by SFU Office of Aboriginal people.

The reaction from students was very encouraging, with those who attended showing fascination and excitement. Students tackled the problems given by the presenters, and

worked on new mathematical puzzles that arose over the course of the day. They said the activities were very fun to do, easy to understand, and caught their attention. Programs like this could be one of the major keys to fighting lack of Aboriginal academics currently in Canada.

Direct Link: <http://www.the-peak.ca/2016/01/workshop-offers-potential-hint-of-future-for-first-nations-academics/>

Program to address aboriginal youth issues

CHARELLE EVELYN / PRINCE GEORGE CITIZEN
JANUARY 24, 2016 10:10 PM



A UNBC offering is returning this spring to help stock the toolkits of social workers who work with indigenous young people.

Applications are now being accepted for the rejigged aboriginal child and youth mental health certificate through UNBC's school of social work. The graduate-level program is designed for students who want to practice in the area of aboriginal child and youth mental health, with a focus on working in northern and remote communities.

It's important to have a certificate that focuses specifically on indigenous youth, said social work lecturer Susan Burke.

"I think part of that is because aboriginal children are over-represented in the child welfare system and, really, in most systems where they receive support services," Burke said. "So I think it's really important that people receive general information about these issues, for all children, but then people who are specifically working with aboriginal children I think also need to have additional learning about the particular issues that end up coming into play in their practice."

Among those issues is colonization, said Burke and knowing "how that impacts aboriginal children and families and how that sort of trickles down into the way you need to work with people and how it continues to impact people."

The online program features six courses, one offered per semester over two calendar years, with subjects ranging from aboriginal peoples in Canada to crisis work with children and youth. School of social work program chair Dawn Hemingway said this is, to the best of her knowledge, the only graduate-level and online aboriginal child and youth mental health certificate offered in the province.

"It's not ideal to simply say 'I have courses in child and youth mental health therefore it's generally applicable,'" Hemingway said. "There is specificity to working with indigenous children and youth, so this is attempting to be able to bridge that."

Previously, the school offered the courses as an undergraduate certificate for those with bachelor's degrees, but stopped in the fall of 2011 to start reworking it for a graduate level.

Having the courses online also helps target the audience of those graduate-level students or those looking to refresh their practice who are already practicing social workers, especially those in more remote communities. "It's not always feasible for people to travel to a campus," said Burke.

In addition to those who want to take the full course load to obtain the certificate, the program is also being opened for current graduate students to take individual courses as electives. Anyone with a bachelor of social work or related degree can also contact the school to ask about applying as a non-degree student. The program begins in May.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/program-to-address-aboriginal-youth-issues-1.2157822#sthash.ONVdwjEG.dpuf>

Canada short-changed First Nation children - court ruling

26 January 2016



Cindy Blackstock (pictured), filed a complaint against the government in 2007

Canada discriminates against First Nation children by providing less money for their child welfare system, a human rights tribunal has ruled.

A First Nations group filed a complaint about it with the Canadian Human Rights Commission in 2007.

Child welfare systems on reserves receive up to 38% less funding than elsewhere in the country, the CBC [calculates](#).

Canada must "cease the discriminatory practice," the ruling says.

The report found that the way the government runs First Nations family and child services "resulted in denials of services and created various adverse impacts for many First Nations children and families living on reserves."

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, which filed the complaint, said the ruling found the government to be providing "flawed and inequitable child welfare services" for 163,000 First Nations children.

"This is a great day for First Nations children and all Canadians who believe in justice and fairness," said Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the group. "Racial discrimination against children must not be tolerated."

Canadian officials said they welcomed the decision and they believe First Nation communities deserve adequate funding.

Image copyrightReutersImage captionJustin Trudeau has promised an improved relationship with First Nations communities

"The Tribunal has made it clear that the system in place today is failing. In a society as prosperous and as generous as Canada, this is unacceptable. This Government agrees that we can and must do better," said Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett.

She said Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tasked her to work with First Nations peoples in Canada to improve relations and programmes.

The federal government tried to have the case dismissed numerous times.

Mr Trudeau made an improved relationship with First Nations peoples one of his campaign promises.

He has said he would make a government inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women in an appeal to First Nations chiefs, calling it "top priority" of his Liberal government.

Mr Trudeau has also promised to fulfil recommendations of a study that found Canada required aboriginals to attend state-funded schools, resulting in "cultural genocide".

"Working together as partners, I am confident that we can make meaningful and immediate progress on the issues that matter most to First Nations communities," Mr Trudeau said last December.

Direct Link: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-35414581>

First Nations leader calls Manitoba a 'child apprehension machine'

There is opportunity to make things right by 'bringing our children home,' Derek Nepinak says

CBC News Posted: Jan 26, 2016 1:09 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 26, 2016 1:17 PM CT



Grand Chief Derek Nepinak of the AMC and Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson of the MKO applaud the finding by a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal that Canada discriminates against First Nations children on reserves by failing to provide the same level of child welfare services that exist elsewhere. (CBC)

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak calls it a watershed moment that he hopes will impact Manitoba's child welfare system.

A Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has ruled the Canadian government discriminates against First Nations children on reserves by failing to provide the level of child welfare services that exist elsewhere.

"This decision acknowledges and legitimizes what our First Nations leaders and people have known for decades: that our children's rights are violated, and our children are not offered the same treatment as the rest of Canada. It's unfortunate that it took so long," said Nepinak, head of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC).

"And it's unfortunate that we had to go through seven or eight years of battling with a Harper government that should have seen that justice is what was due for our young people."

But now it's time to make some changes, he said.

Less funding for First Nations family support means more children have ended up in the child welfare system, Nepinak said.

"The province of Manitoba's system has been broken for quite some time. It's a child apprehension machine," he said.

"As the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has identified, it's something that we've said all along — the system is designed and motivated to actually apprehend more children."

Manitoba has the highest number of First Nations children in care compared to the rest of Canada and also has the highest child apprehension rate in the world, according to the AMC.

Nepinak acknowledged that steps are being taken to change the Manitoba child welfare system, with the province last month proposing changes to the Child and Family Services Act.

The change would see more responsibility given to indigenous communities, allowing children to be placed with other relatives or families in the same community.

But now there is opportunity to make things right across the country by "bringing our children home," Nepinak said.

That means "building the proper capacity at the community level, including the infrastructure needed to keep our children in the community, instead of dislocating them and putting them in foster care placements that are disconnected from their language and their culture and their families," he said.

"Depending on the government response ... if they allocate the right resources and bring the right parties to the table, I think this could be a moment in time that we'll remember where families started to be empowered once again."

A way to keep families together

Sheila North Wilson, grand chief of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, which represents First Nations in the province's north, wholeheartedly agrees.

"[This ruling] is huge. It could be part of the solution of the nation-to-nation building that we're hearing about and we've all pushed for. This is part of it," she said.

The solution must be "a way to keep families together," she said.

"Whether that means investment into more mentors and workers that are going to be in the home themselves, then we need to do that," she said.

"We are so quick to spend so much money, millions of dollars, putting children in care and apprehending them from their families. We should be doing the reverse — putting in resources into homes and into communities, where kids can stay home with their families within their own communities.

"Nothing was done in the past and this previous [federal] government didn't really care or even acknowledge that there was a problem. And now we're seeing there is a problem. So the time is now."

Warrior and hero

Both she and Nepinak praised Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations and Family Caring Society, who first filed the Canadian Human Rights Commission complaint — along with the Assembly of First Nations — in February 2007.

"She's a tremendous champion and a true warrior of this generation," Nepinak said.

"We should honour her for her work and her perseverance, overcoming bullying tactics, overcoming the effects of the surveillance the Harper government had used to try to persuade her to step away from this.

"She is certainly a hero of our time."

"The importance of this decision cannot be over-stated," said Kevin Hart, the AFN's Manitoba regional chief, who is responsible for the assembly's child welfare portfolio.

"The AFN lifts up our partner in this work, Cindy Blackstock ... for her long-standing commitment and dedication to achieving equity for our kids. This is about our children, our families and our future, and we will be relentless in our efforts to ensure they have every opportunity to justice, fairness and success."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/first-nations-tribunal-discriminates-ruling-1.3420182>

Canada pledges to overhaul broken welfare program for indigenous children

Funds to be increased after human rights body found country was racially discriminating against aboriginal youth by underfunding the system in Ottawa



Canada's indigenous affairs minister Carolyn Bennett speaks during a news conference in Ottawa, Canada on Tuesday. Photograph: Chris Wattie/Reuters

Tuesday 26 January 2016 21.33 GMT, Last modified on Tuesday 26 January 2016 21.51 GMT

Canada's federal government has pledged to overhaul its broken First Nation child welfare program after a human rights body found it was racially discriminating against aboriginal youth by underfunding the system.

Tuesday's ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal is being called one of the most important rights decisions related to the country's First Nations in a decade, and it is one that will have a profound and costly impact.

The tribunal found the government's program denied services to First Nations children and families living on reserves, did not adequately address their needs, and through shortfalls made it far more likely for First Nations children to be removed from their families.

It also found Ottawa failed to act despite being aware of the adverse affects of the flawed system for years and has ordered the government "cease its discriminatory practices and reform (the program)".

It is weighing compensation for the thousands of children affected by the funding inequity.

Cindy Blackstock, who launched the rights challenge with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) advocacy group nine years ago, called the ruling "a complete victory for children".

"It strips away any sensibility that First Nations children are being treated fairly by the government of Canada today," said Blackstock, who serves as executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society.

Federal indigenous affairs minister Carolyn Bennett said she welcomed the ruling and pledged to significantly increase funds available to the program.

"We have to start at making sure that First Nations, Inuit and Métis children in this country get the same start in life as all other Canadian children," she said.

The government pegs the actual funding shortfall for on-reserve child welfare services at between 22% to 34%, compared to funding provided by provinces and territories to non-aboriginal children.

Blackstock said she estimates the system needs an additional \$200m added to the \$600m currently earmarked annually for child welfare services.

In Canada, 48% of children in foster care are aboriginal even though aboriginal youth make up just 7% of the population.

The recent Truth and Reconciliation report – the result of a six-year investigation into the legacy of Canada's residential school system for indigenous children – also flagged the problem and called for reforms to the child welfare system in its 94 recommendations for reconciliation.

AFN national chief Perry Bellegarde called Tuesday's ruling an opportunity to act of that recommendation.

"In this great country, there is no room for discrimination or racism," he said.

“Canada has an obligation to First Nations people to rectify the wrong and remedy the situation.”

Justin Trudeau, the liberal prime minister who took office in November, has made repairing the relationship with aboriginal people in Canada one of his government’s top priorities.

Aboriginal groups now say they will be looking to the next federal budget – expected either in late February or in March – for the funds to back up those commitments.

Federal justice minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, who was a regional chief with the AFN as the rights complaint was working its way through the courts, said Tuesday the government would be sitting down with Blackstock and other advocates to discuss how to close the gaps in the current system.

Asked about the potential costs of reforms, she said: “It’s difficult to put a price tag on not providing indigenous children with the opportunity to be able to succeed.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/26/canada-discriminated-against-indigenous-children-welfare-services>

Indigenous education at Winnipeg's major universities up for debate Thursday

'Professors have a responsibility to get informed'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 26, 2016 10:24 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 26, 2016 11:59 AM CT



Two of Manitoba's major universities are approaching indigenous education very differently and that's the topic of debate on Thursday.

Last spring the University of Winnipeg approved a motion making it mandatory for students to take at least one indigenous studies course to graduate.

In December, the University of Manitoba and the U of W were among provincial post-secondary schools to sign an Indigenous Education Blueprint.

The blueprint is designed to take action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, including bringing indigenous knowledge, languages and intellectual traditions to curricula and building schools and campuses that are free of racism.

On Thursday, indigenous scholars, students and professionals will debate whether a mandatory indigenous studies course in post-secondary schools is a good idea.

"All universities and colleges are thinking about it, and if they're not thinking about it, they need to start thinking about it," said Deborah Young, the executive lead for indigenous achievement at the U of M.

The discussion is part of the U of M's second annual Indigenous Awareness Week, which runs from Jan. 25 to 29.



Deborah Young is the executive lead for indigenous achievement at the University of Manitoba. (CBC)

Young said indigenous students at the university have told her they want their professors to know and teach indigenous topics in the classroom.

"They don't want to be the only spokesperson in that classroom," said Young.

She's also heard that professors want to be knowledgeable on indigenous issues.

"They're asking, 'How do we do this?' It's the million-dollar question," she said.

The U of M's approach to indigenous education means that once the blueprint is created and implemented, professors in a variety of faculties will be knowledgeable on indigenous topics and can infuse that into their lessons.

"We have just over 6,000 academic staff at the U of M. Can you imagine what it would be like if each one of those professors had a basic understanding of indigenous knowledge — what transformation that would have on students?" she said. "This approach will take years to implement, but I think it will have a lasting impact."

The U of W's approach is quick and means professors who are already experts in indigenous studies will teach students, rather than training all professors on indigenous topics, Young said.

"I think both [approaches] are necessary," she said. "My preference is to have a university that's inclusive, far-reaching and aware of indigenous issues straight across the board.... Professors have a responsibility to get informed, get the knowledge and also relay that knowledge to the classroom."

The schedule for Indigenous Awareness Week 2016:

- Tuesday, Jan. 26 - Respecting and protecting indigenous knowledge in the learning environment, noon-1:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Jan. 27 - Surviving the colonized classroom, noon-1:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Jan. 28 - Indigenous course requirement: good or bad? noon-1:30 p.m.
- Friday, Jan. 29 - Bringing residential school survivors' perspectives and knowledge into the curriculum, noon-2 p.m.

Locations are available on the [University of Manitoba website](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/indigenous-education-at-winnipeg-s-major-universities-up-for-debate-thursday-1.3419944>

Nunavut Sivuniksavut's next big step: a student residence

Inuit institution in Ottawa launches campaign to raise \$2 million

JIM BELL, January 26, 2016 - 11:30 am



Nunavut Sivuniksavut students attending class last year at their facility on Rideau St. in Ottawa. The board of NS now wants to acquire their own student residence and, to that end, has launched a fund-raising campaign to raise \$2 million. (NS PHOTO)

OTTAWA — The board that runs Nunavut Sivuniksavut is now ready for its next step: a permanent student residence in Ottawa to house the growing number of first-year students who study there each year.

“We’re hoping to bring everyone together in a big effort,” said Jesse Mike, the chair of the NS board of directors.

To get that effort started, NS hopes to raise \$2 million from old friends and allies in Nunavut’s Inuit organizations, the governments of Nunavut and Canada and also, the private sector.

Mike, who attended NS herself in 2004-05, said NS now attracts about 40 first year students to Ottawa each year.

Right now, they live in a collection of apartments that NS leases annually from private landlords under standard 12-month leases.

The NS students, who usually share rooms in those apartments, pay rent for the eight-month period they spend in Ottawa attending the NS program.

NS covers rent for the four-month period when students do not occupy those units.

This arrangement means students collectively spend about \$200,000 a year during each eight-month period and NS spends about \$100,000 a year to subsidize those rents.

“All that money is going into the pockets of private landlords,” Mike said.

Right now, she said NS is looking at different options for creating its own residence.

One option might be the purchase of an existing apartment building in Sandy Hill, an Ottawa neighbourhood just east of downtown that’s popular with students.

Another possibility is that NS might build or acquire its own residence, Mike said.

She said some students do get their own places, but most students like to stay together and share the accommodations that NS leases for them.

Acquiring a residence would help the NS program build equity, Mike said. But beyond that financial advantage, an NS-owned residence could provide students, most of whom are on their own in the city for the first time in their lives, with more security and ease the concerns of their families.

Since the opening in 2011 of their school facility at 450 Rideau St., the 31-year-old NS program now accepts about 10 to 15 second year students annually, in addition to the larger group of first year students.

Second year students usually rent and pay for accommodations on their own, Mike said.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_sivuniksavuts_next_big_step_a_student_residence/

Winnipeg School Division to offer bilingual classes in Cree and Ojibway



WSD needed 20 students minimum to register for each program. On Tuesday, 40 kids were registered in each.

Meghan Roberts, CTV Winnipeg

Published Tuesday, January 26, 2016 7:22PM CST

Last Updated Wednesday, January 27, 2016 4:55AM CST

The Winnipeg School Division announced that bilingual classes in Cree and Ojibway will be offered in September.

WSD needed 20 students minimum to register for each program. On Tuesday, 40 kids were registered in each.

In Kindergarten, children will learn completely in Cree or Ojibway.



WSD elder Myra Laramée said the immersion programs will normalize indigenous language.

Grades one through six will learn half in English and half in Cree or Ojibway.

Lessons will include traditional activities and culture, as well as meeting provincial curriculum requirements.

WSD elder Myra Laramée said the bilingual programs will normalize indigenous language. She said in a year, children will no longer be afraid to speak their language.

Kindergarten classes start in September and are open to anyone.

Parents do not have to speak Cree or Ojibway to register their children.

Registration ends on Jan. 29.

Direct Link: <http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/winnipeg-school-division-to-offer-bilingual-classes-in-cree-and-ojibway-1.2753408>

First Nation street names proposed

JOHN CAIRNS , STAFF REPORTER / BATTLEFORDS NEWS-OPTIMIST
JANUARY 27, 2016 10:36 AM



In the aftermath of the death of renowned local artist Allen Sapp, Marilyn Richardson was before council Monday to suggest city streets in North Battleford be renamed for Sapp and for other Cree individuals and themes. Photo by John Cairns

Wander around North Battleford and you see streets, avenues and drives named after numbers, railways, former Prime Ministers and prominent local people, among others.

What's missing, according to Marilyn Richardson, are streets reflecting Cree heritage or the contributions of First Nation individuals.

Richardson was before North Battleford council Monday to make the case that now is the time to rename a number of streets in North Battleford after prominent aboriginal people.

“I believe that the names of streets and places in our city should reflect our First Nation and Métis heritage,” Richardson said in her presentation.

“It is not evident from the names of streets and places in North Battleford that there is a large First Nations and Métis population here and that they do contribute to the diversity and culture of our community.”

She pointed to several examples of streets in other Canadian communities that have Cree or First Nation-based names. Street names in Saskatoon include Meewasin Trail and Wanuskewin Road. There is Pasqua Street in Regina and Calgary includes such freeways as Scarcee Trail, Blackfoot Trail, Shaganappi Trail, Deerfoot Trail and Crowchild Trail, as examples.

Richardson singled out the various railway-themed streets for causing confusion for visitors coming into the city, and suggested replacing those streets with Cree names.

She suggested Railway Avenue be renamed Allen Sapp Road, in honor of the renowned Cree artist who recently passed away. His name graces the museum on the same street.

Richardson also suggested South Railway Avenue be renamed Chief Poundmaker Trail, and West Railway be renamed Amisk Trail, which when translated from Cree means “Beaver Trail.”

The suggestions gave councillors something to think about and they all seemed receptive to the idea. There was a consensus that consultation with the public would be needed before a street is renamed.

Councillor Ryan Bater, however, pointed out that there already was a Poundmaker Trail in North Battleford that runs down from the Highway 16 bypass past the golf course.

As well, he noted a portion of Highway 40 heading out to Poundmaker First Nation was also named Poundmaker Trail.

As for renaming a street, the process is complicated. Mayor Ian Hamilton said to reporters after the meeting. “It is not easy to change a street name,” he explained.

It means having to “change GPS, all of those things.” And that impacts public safety, in terms of sending emergency personnel out to various locations, he said.

There is also a protocol in place for street names in various parts of the city, based on certain themes. The mayor explained that in the Kildeer neighbourhood the streets were named after birds, as one example.

It was a lot easier, Hamilton said, to name a new street.

He did tell reporters the idea to recognize First Nation heritage on city streets is a good one.

“Certainly we are rich in history of Aboriginal descent, and this is great recognition of some of that,” said Hamilton.

The mayor said he looked forward to discussions and conversations about this in the future.

City Manager Jim Puffalt suggested it would be beneficial to send the idea to Planning and Development to get an idea as to what would be involved in a name change.

Puffalt also said he would ask the Parks Department if there were any parks that didn’t have a name at the moment, saying that would be another great opportunity “to be able to acknowledge and recognize peoples’ contributions to the community.”

- See more at: <http://www.newsoptimist.ca/news/local-news/first-nation-street-names-proposed-1.2159792#sthash.HNNCwIgl.dpuf>

Human rights for aboriginal children in N.S. no better, chief says

THE CHRONICLE HERALD

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Morley Googoo, the Assembly of First Nations regional chief for Nova Scotia, hopes public acknowledgement will enlighten the population and act as a compound for change.

CORRECTION: This is a corrected version of this story. An early version incorrectly stated that there were 42 reserves in Nova Scotia. There are 13 bands.

For those who live on First Nations reserves, Tuesday's human rights ruling only served to echo what is already known: that the Government of Canada has been discriminating against aboriginal children for years by failing to provide an adequate level of support.

In Nova Scotia where there are 13 Mi'kmaq bands, and 16 per cent of children in foster care are aboriginal, there's no exception.

"I've seen the struggles and challenges of foster kids, it seems like it has fallen on deaf ears," said Morley Googoo, Assembly of First Nations regional chief for Nova Scotia.

Googoo, who has spent nearly two decades as a board member for Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services, said while Canada's aboriginal population has been aware of the issue for many years, he hopes public acknowledgement serves to enlighten the general population and act as a catalyst for change.

"It's important that this case helps stop discrimination because there's a certain stereotype of First Nations people, that we're the cause of our own problems, but we're not," he said.

"We look at the residential school era, and say that was then, that's not my era. But this case says discrimination happens today folks. It is your problem, and it should be."

Cheryl Maloney, president of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, said while more resources for the drastically underfunded programs aimed at assisting families and children are needed to help combat the issue of over-representation of First Nations children in foster care, the situation is much more complicated than that.

Lasting impacts from the residential schools and the pervasive poverty in many communities has resulted in a vicious circle that is being sustained by the foster care system and needs to be addressed at a systematic level.

"(First Nation) communities have been suffering since they were created. You can't expect a healthy community to grow from a situation of poverty," she said.

"Then you take these very unhealthy communities and apply standards, laws and values based on middle-income Canadians that never had to go through these challenges, or the socioeconomic challenges or the residential schools, it's pretty tough to be a healthy community."

Maloney said many children are being removed from their homes because of the very issues caused by this cycle, and foster regulations that fail to take into account the unique challenges on First Nation reserves prevent many children from being placed with family. As a result, they lose ties to their family, their culture, and they are put at higher risk.

"When a Mi'kmaw child goes into care they're at risk of going missing, or being murdered, (or) being trafficked. (The majority) of them (don't) graduate high school."

Maloney said she hopes the new government comes to the table with the resources and political will to start remedying the effects of years of discrimination, and that Canadians will support the effort that will ensure aboriginal children have equal opportunities.

“A lot of work has to be done. Resources are one thing, but we really need to wrap our heads around the problem and come up with other solutions. We need to look at alternatives to putting children in care, and keep families strong and healthy.”

Direct Link: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/novascotia/1337560-human-rights-for-aboriginal-children-in-n.s.-no-better-chief-says>

Indigenous Ottawans hopeful after child welfare ruling

'Now Canada as a whole can see that this is the truth. I think that's very important.'

By Waubgeshig Rice, CBC News Posted: Jan 26, 2016 6:09 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 26, 2016 6:09 PM ET



Josh Lewis says the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling gave him "goosebumps." (Waubgeshig Rice/CBC News)

People in Ottawa's indigenous community are hopeful and relieved after the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's ruling that the federal government discriminates against children living in First Nations.

According to the landmark decision, children living on reserve don't receive the same funding and supports as children who live elsewhere in Canada.

Josh Lewis, an outreach worker at the Shawenjeagamik Aboriginal Drop-In Centre on Rideau Street, believes this is an opportunity for all Canadians to understand the child welfare gap between First Nations and other communities.

"Obviously the people on reserve know that that happened, because they experienced it," he said. "But now Canada as a whole can see that this is the truth. I think that's very important."



Children and youth gathered at Parliament Hill for the annual youth-led Have a Heart Day in 2012. (First Nations Child and Family Caring Society)

Lewis says that learning of Tuesday's ruling gave him "goosebumps," and made him think of his young relatives in Wikwemikong and M'Chigeeng, Anishinaabe communities on Manitoulin Island in northern Ontario.

"I hope it means that the whole system kind of appreciates them more, and that they're respected, and they can grow up proud," he added.

The ruling comes nearly a decade after Cindy Blackstock of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada filed an initial human rights complaint against the federal government in 2007.

'Victory for children'

Speaking at a press conference in Ottawa, Blackstock called the decision a "victory for children".



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde looks on as First Nations Child and Family Caring Society's Cindy Blackstock speaks about the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on discrimination against First Nations children in care, during a news conference in Ottawa, on Jan. 26, 2016. (Adrian Wyld/CP)

"I want to dedicate this decision to all of the First Nations children who for years and for decades have been denied an equal opportunity to live the life they wished to have had, and sadly too often were judged by a Canadian public who didn't know better, as if they got more," she said.

Federal Indigenous Affairs minister Carolyn Bennett promised to work with Indigenous leaders to come up with solutions to improve child welfare services on-reserve.

Verna McGregor from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, about 140 kilometres north of Ottawa, hopes the next steps to improve on-reserve child welfare include a strong cultural component to raise awareness throughout the entire Canadian child welfare system.

"It's good that they acknowledged the human rights of the funding of kids on and off reserve that are not in parity," she said. "But if you aren't looking at cultural differences and understanding, how do you address the whole issue of racism and bias?"

She's hopeful this decision will lead to a better future for First Nations children in Canada, and Lewis agrees.

"They don't have to grow up on reserve thinking their life is terrible," he said. "Maybe the school systems will become better on the reserve. And I'm hoping that my future generations just become proud."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/indigenous-ottawans-hopeful-after-child-welfare-ruling-1.3421122>

Canada's failing reserve schools jeopardize aboriginal students: study

The research found only four of 10 young adults living on reserves across the country have finished high school, prompting calls for multi-pronged reform.



British Columbia led the country for high-school certification on reserves, coming in at nearly 60 per cent. B.C. Education Minister Mike Bernier was quoted last year as celebrating a nine-percentage-point jump in the aboriginal graduation rate in the province over the past six years, both on and off reserves.

By: Geordon Omand The Canadian Press, Published on Thu Jan 28 2016

VANCOUVER—Reserve schools are failing Canada's aboriginal students and there is no quick-and-easy fix, says a new report from the C.D. Howe Institute.

A study released Thursday by the research group found that only four of 10 young adults living on reserves across the country have finished high school.

Those figures contrast sharply with graduation rates of seven out of 10 for off-reserve aboriginals and nine out of 10 for non-aboriginals. The study also found eight out of 10 Métis graduate from high school across the country.

John Richards, one of the study's authors, said any attempt at reform needs to be multi-pronged and more incremental than earlier attempts at sweeping, legislative solutions.

"There's no silver bullet here. Giving more money won't fix it all," Richards said in an interview, adding that an increase in funding is still an essential part of any viable plan to improve on-reserve schools.

The study called "Students in Jeopardy: An Agenda for Improving Results in Band-Operated Schools" highlights the many repercussions stemming from low levels of education, including unemployment, poverty, limited social and economic opportunities, crime, health problems and ongoing dependence on government for housing.

"This bleak prospect should make improving education results for on-reserve students imperative for bands, the (Assembly of First Nations) and the federal government," reads the report.

The research singles out British Columbia as leading the country for high-school certification on reserves, coming in at nearly 60 per cent — handily topping the national average of 42 per cent.

B.C. Education Minister Mike Bernier was quoted late last year as celebrating a nine-percentage-point jump in the aboriginal graduation rate in the province over the past six years, both on and off reserves.

In comparison, the graduation level in Manitoba was pegged at 30 per cent, about half that of British Columbia's.

Richards attributed B.C.'s relative success to several factors, including the presence of a province-wide aboriginal education group that acts as a pseudo-school board, as well as collaboration between B.C.'s First Nations Education Steering Committee, the province and the federal government.

He spoke against focusing immediately on legislation as a solution, referencing the high-profile failures of the Kelowna Accord a decade ago and, more recently, Bill C-33, the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act that drew loud opposition from the aboriginal community.

"The diversity of viewpoints among First Nation leaders and the often poorly informed positions advanced in Parliament mean that legislative reserve-school reform has become a Sisyphean exercise," the report read.

Instead, Richards pushed for incremental change by increasing reserve-school funding, setting clear and measurable targets, regularly assessing those targets and affirming band responsibilities.

"A prerequisite to improving reserve schools is to acknowledge First Nations' legitimate distrust of government, rooted in Canada's efforts to dismantle aboriginal languages and cultures, in particular through residential schools," reads the report.

A spokeswoman for Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada said the Liberal government will make "significant new investments" to ensure children on reserves receive a quality education, while also respecting the principle of First Nations control of First Nations education.

"The government will explore options and develop a road map to move forward on First Nation education. We will be able to provide more details once that direction is established," said Valerie Hache in a statement.

"By sitting down with First Nations and listening to their concerns and ideas, we will be able to determine together how to improve education outcomes for First Nation students and ensure First Nation control of education reforms in their communities."

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/01/28/canadas-failing-reserve-schools-jeopardize-aboriginal-students-study.html>

Band councils, provinces need to work together on aboriginal education: report

CHRISTOPHER CURTIS, MONTREAL GAZETTE

Published on: January 28, 2016 | Last Updated: January 28, 2016 7:57 AM EST



A woman puts her hand on a girl's shoulder during an aboriginal protest against the First Nations Education act and missing aboriginal women on Wednesday May 14, 2014 in Ottawa.

There are no “magic bullet” solutions to the high dropout rates that plague Canada’s on-reserve schools, but change can be achieved through both immediate and incremental reforms.

These are among the findings of a report on aboriginal education published Thursday by the C.D. Howe Institute. Beyond the well-worn argument that aboriginal education is underfunded, the study suggests the federal government is ill-equipped to administer on-reserve schools.

“First Nations education may be Ottawa’s jurisdiction but there’s no real expertise there,” said John Richards, co-author of the study and a professor at Simon Fraser University. “To the extent that such expertise exists, it’s in the provincial school districts.”

About 42 per cent of aboriginals who study on-reserve will earn a high school diploma by the time they’re 24 years old, according to the report. Meanwhile, graduation rates for that same age group in non-indigenous communities are about 89.9 per cent.

Change how education is delivered

Underfunding is a major source of concern, but Richards says there’s a lot to gain through structural reform of the way education is delivered on-reserve.

As it stands, most First Nations work with the federal government to administer their own elementary and high schools — creating what amounts to hundreds of miniature school boards across the country. The report suggests that band councils unite to form regional school commissions that work closely with provincial education ministries.

“You can’t, with the best of intentions, get good outcomes if you’re just running standalone schools,” says Richards. “There’s got to be collaboration with provincial systems, there’s got to be pulling together large collections of First Nations rather than one single reserve.”

Regional school boards, he argues, could measure the effectiveness of curriculum, identifying what works and what doesn’t.

In British Columbia — which boasts the country’s highest aboriginal graduation rates — there’s a system of cooperation between First Nations and the provincial education ministry. Students in the province can switch between on and off-reserve schools without losing credits and non-aboriginal schools receive additional funding for each aboriginal student they teach.

A collaborative approach

This collaborative approach between Ottawa, B.C. and its First Nations has been in effect since 1998 and it’s yielding results. The province also meets regularly with aboriginal leaders to set goals and measure outcomes.

Quebec’s Cree School Board, which oversees 15 schools in the James Bay region, is one of the few aboriginal commissions that works closely with a provincial ministry to establish and monitor curriculum.

“The funds come from Ottawa but our relationship to the province is key,” says Abraham Jolly, director general of the Cree School Board (CSB). “The provinces know more about education, why not work with them? There’s a way to be independent, autonomous but also lean on the experience of practices that have worked elsewhere.”

The CSB is reforming its curriculum to emphasize a balance between literacy, math and Cree language programs.

The ripple effect

“Our emphasis is on getting kids to read and write by Grade 3 because if the system doesn’t start working for them before then, it’ll have a ripple effect,” says Jolly.

Though graduation rates sit at about 11 per cent within the school board, Jolly says that number will climb this year and expects it to continue growing over the next five years. The CSB’s target is for 50 per cent of Grade 11 students to graduate by 2020.

During last year’s federal election campaign, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau promised upwards of \$2.6 billion in new aboriginal education funding. Trudeau also vowed to lift

annual funding caps that created a gap between the amount spent on educating aboriginal and non-aboriginal students.

Richards lauds more funding for education. His report suggests the money could be used to bring funding on par with non-aboriginal schools, but it also calls for a system where teachers would be paid bonuses for working in remote First Nations and schools would earn extra funding if they hit certain benchmarks.

The goal, he says, is to get schools to operate within a professionally organized system that tracks progress and meets incremental goals.

While Richards recognizes the role that social problems like poverty, poor access to housing and the legacy of residential schools play in sabotaging the quality of on-reserve education, he's optimistic things will improve.

"If you look across the country, there's a realization that we have to make this work," said Richards. "Perhaps now more than ever, there's a willingness from (non-aboriginal) Canadians and politicians to come to grips with this."

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/national/band-councils-provinces-need-to-work-together-on-aboriginal-education-report>

Landmark ruling comes as double edge sword for local first nations

By [Jessica Lepp](#)

January 27, 2016 - 3:58pm Updated: January 27, 2016 - 5:49pm



KAMLOOPS — First nations in Kamloops are declaring victory this week but at the unfortunate cost of the livelihood of thousands of children.

The President of the Secwepemc Child and Family Services Sandra Seymour says she was very emotional when she heard about the ruling.

“It's a travesty that first nations had to go to a ruling,” says Seymour.

It's a victory on one hand because after 9 years the Humans Rights Tribunal has agreed with the Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada that Ottawa discriminated against first nations children on reserves when it comes to welfare.

Seymour says, "the fact we had to go to the tribunal for aboriginal children to be treated equally in Canada. That just puts a black mark on our country.”

The Conservatives were in power when the complaint was launched in 2007 and vehemently opposed it in court. The Kamloops Thompson Cariboo Tory Member of Parliament and critic for Indigenous Affairs says she thought her government and those before were making progress.

Cathy McLeod said her party brought in the ability for the Human Rights legislation to apply on reserves and says she thinks they made some good progress on a whole number of issues.

McLeod says, “instead of worrying about jurisdictional disputes, we had said to Department of Indian Affairs, you pay up front and you worry about jurisdictional issues later. I think government had felt it was making some important and reasonable progress on this issue. Clearly the report indicated differently.”

Seymour says, “the Harper government never made progress. Harper did not want to make progress. The Harper government stood in the way of this.”

Now that the ruling has found Ottawa under funds welfare on reserves by 22% there is cautious optimism change will happen under the Liberal government.

Stephen Knudson is the Executive Director of of the Secwepemc Child and Family Services ad says, “I've heard government commitments that haven't been followed through. I would like to see something tangible. If funding comes through it would improve outcomes for children in care.”

There is hope the 25 year old funding model for aboriginal children will drastically increase so that children living on either side of the Thompson River will be treated equal.

The new Liberal government has promised it will significantly increase funding.

After 9 long years of fighting for equality, local indigenous people are hopeful Ottawa will put the money where their mouth is and improve conditions for first nations children in care.

Direct Link: <http://cfjctoday.com/article/510247/landmark-ruling-comes-double-edge-sword-local-first-nations>

Debunking the myth that all First Nations people receive free post-secondary education

Demand for funding far exceeds money bands receive for post-secondary education

By Lenard Monkman, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 29, 2016 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 29, 2016 11:29 AM ET



Charlotte Boubard is in the bachelor of science program at the University of Winnipeg. (Lenard Monkman/CBC)

It's one of the commonly held beliefs about First Nations people in this country: they all get free post-secondary education.

Problem is, it's not true. And the reality is much more complicated.

To help make sense of it, here's a little of what Canadians should know about First Nations people and funding for post-secondary education.

Not for all First Nations students

Only "status Indians" — or people recognized by the federal government as "Indian" — are eligible to receive funding for post-secondary education through Indigenous and Northern Affairs funding.

If you don't have Indian status, you don't qualify



Ivana Yellowback is in her third year with a double major in conflict resolution and criminal justice studies at the University of Winnipeg. (Supplied)

Ivana Yellowback, from Manito Sipi First Nation, is in her third year and is a double major in conflict resolution and criminal justice studies at the University of Winnipeg.

"Education is a treaty right, and we were supposed to all get education, but because of the Indian Act and the implementation of the funding we're under, it's not possible," Yellowback said.

Even when First Nations people are eligible for funding, that does not mean they automatically get it.

Not enough for all who are eligible

Students have to apply for funding for school from their home community.

Most often, the demand for funding far exceeds the money that bands receive for post-secondary education.

Serinda Baptiste, a band councillor at Little Pine First Nation, Sask., said the band can fund approximately 15-23 students each year — but has to turn away about 30 applications.

Many communities had limited funds to distribute because of what's known as the two per cent First Nations funding cap.

First imposed by a Liberal government in 1996, the two per cent cap was a limit Indigenous and Northern Affairs — then called Indian Affairs and Northern Development — placed on annual increases to First Nations' budgets. Many First Nations say the sting of the cap was most felt in education funding.

While the cap is being lifted, no changes have been made yet to the funding situation.

Crystal Tootoosis, the post-secondary administrator/student counsellor at Poundmaker First Nation, Sask., said that means even though there is a steady increase in her

community's high school graduation rate, the band can still only fund a maximum of 30 students per year.

Strict conditions apply

For those who do receive funding, the money often comes with strict conditions.

Many students must reapply to their band every year, uphold a certain grade point average, have a career outline, not miss classes and take a minimum of four courses per semester.

Students who have their funding pulled because they have missed or failed classes often have to wait a minimum of two years before they can reapply.

Most reserves have funding priorities

The number 1 priority is often newly graduated high school students. Next are people continuing their undergraduate studies, then masters students and then people who have been out of school for a while.



Feather Pewapisconias is the president of the Indigenous Students Council at the University of Saskatchewan. (Supplied)

Feather Pewapisconias is the president of the Indigenous Students Council at the University of Saskatchewan. She said she knows a number of First Nations students who haven't received funding, including her mother who was turned away for funding for her masters degree because she had been out of university for too long.

Some communities also place priority on people who actually live on-reserve.

Andre Bear is an education student at the University of Saskatchewan. Bear graduated from high school with the highest marks and was valedictorian.

However, because he had lived off-reserve his whole life, he didn't receive funding for his first year of university. He went back home to meet the people in his community, and then he got funding.

Funding may not cover all costs

The funding students receive only goes so far and only pays for so much. Some only have the cost of their tuition and books covered for the term.

Many students have to either work or apply for loans to cover living expenses.

Shannon Bear is in her fourth year at the University of Winnipeg, majoring in indigenous studies, and plans to pursue an education degree.

"I was funded for one year of school from my band. I didn't bother to take a student loan and ended up working three jobs to pay for schooling."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/debunking-the-myth-that-all-first-nations-people-receive-free-post-secondary-education-1.3414183?cmp=abfb>

Tribunal ruling gives First Nations 'teeth' to advocate for change

By **François Biber/Lasia Kretzel**, January 27, 2016 - 5:00pm



FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron at the John Diefenbaker Airport in Saskatoon on Jan. 27, 2016

A landmark ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal gives aboriginal and Metis Nations more 'teeth' when it comes to lobbying the federal government for increased investment and opportunity.

"We can't turn a blind eye and we're not going to. We owe it to our children across this country, an investment in youth and students will only enhance our ability to be positive,

contributing factors to our communities,” Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) Chief Bobby Cameron told reporters Wednesday.

“(This ruling) gives us more leverage to get these commitments fulfilled because it is one of our inherent treaty rights.”

On Tuesday the tribunal ruled that the federal government has been critically underfunding child welfare programs on reserves compared to the rest of Canada, to the tune of about \$200 million.

Cameron paralleled the tribunal ruling to the recent tragedy in the northern Saskatchewan town of La Loche stating that child welfare, housing, poverty and mental health are all connected.

Cameron said he’s optimistic the federal budget in April will address funding shortfalls First Nations have been dealing with for decades.

“It’s going to be very key in terms of how much money will be allocated for education, housing and infrastructure and equally important, the different programs and services that have to be offered to youth and students,” Cameron said shortly before boarding a plane to Ottawa for meetings on how to move forward on recommendations from the tribunal and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Court Challenges Program of Canada (CCPC) director Ken Norman said he has never seen such time and dedication to a case.

"I think it's a story that is riveting if you consider what a rare thing it is for so many people to have for so many years given their time. Some five lawyers literally gave millions of dollars of their fees to this case," he said, adding the ruling shows the need for the restoration of the Court Challenges program.

In 2006, the federal government stopped CCPC from taking new cases effectively shutting down the arm’s-length, tax-funded office that vets and partially funds cases involving substantive violations of language or equality rights.

Two years later, it partially restored the program’s ability to take on cases involving language rights.

CCPC supported the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society's complaint to the tribunal.

Norman said the remarkable thing about the tribunal's ruling were the future reforms and retroactive damages.

"The federal government's got to figure out a way to give those kids the same kind of services that other kids are entitled to, based on their need," he said.

The tribunal will reconvene a hearing in the next three weeks to examine individual cases of children whose needs were not met, and the damages they should be awarded as a result.

If the federal government doesn't address these concerns and recommendations, Cameron said he will continue to fight for what First Nations in Canada deserve.

"We'll continue to advocate and lobby for our First Nations and Metis people to finally get what's rightfully owed to our people," he said. "It's an investment right, it's an investment for the future of Saskatchewan our First Nations people and ultimately the economy of Saskatchewan and Canada."

Cameron also called on schools across the province to lower flags to half-staff on Friday, as well as to join together and hold a moment of silence and prayer for the victims of the La Loche school shooting and the families affected.

"We're asking everyone across this province that on Friday morning 9 a.m., we take a moment of silence and a moment of prayers for the people of the north," Cameron said.

The cities of Regina and Prince Albert plan to hold their own vigils Wednesday night to remember those lives lost last week.

Direct Link: <http://ckom.com/article/520116/tribunal-ruling-gives-first-nations-teeth-advocate-change>

Seeking success

[Jason Kerr](#), Published on January 27, 2016

The Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (SRPSD) says Aboriginal students are seeing more success thanks to some recent initiatives.



From left to right, Randy Emerson (superintendent of schools), Barry Hollick (board chair), Robert Bratvold (director of education) and Donald Lloyd (chief financial officer) of the Saskatchewan Rivers

Public School Division prepare to answer a question during the open forum at the division's Annual General Meeting on Monday.

Last school year the division made it a priority to develop student achievement initiatives in partnership with local aboriginal leaders and stakeholders.

At the division's Annual General Meeting on Monday, director of education Robert Bratvold said they're starting to see some success.

"First Nation and Metis students in our system do very well, close to their non-First Nation and Metis counterparts (around the province)," he explained.

During Monday's meeting, Bratvold said schools throughout the province have traditionally poorly served aboriginal students, however that's starting to change. He said new programs like Following their Voices and the division's new mentorship initiative, have sparked progress.

Despite the success, Bratvold said they're still not where they want to be. Graduation rates among First Nation and Metis students have stalled recently, despite the successes.

"We've had a fairly good history in terms of our division exceeding the provincial averages for First Nation and Metis graduation rates. In the last year we held our own, but we didn't exceed what we hoped to reach," Bratvold said.

Prince Albert's First Nation and Metis students continue to graduate at higher rates than the provincial average, which hovers around the 40 to 50 per cent mark. Still, Bratvold said the numbers need to improve.

"We're not where we need to be, and so we've got lots of really keen and capable staff helping us to lead that direction, and we're trying to reach out in terms of partners to support our work."

Direct Link: <http://www.paherald.sk.ca/News/Local/2016-01-27/article-4416704/Seeking-success/1>

Aboriginal Health

Mentally ill Cree woman can go home to Saskatchewan, board says

Marlene Carter's family, advocates hope she can get more culturally relevant treatment in her home province

By Waubgeshig Rice, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 21, 2016 4:20 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 22, 2016 5:38 PM ET



Marlene Carter, 44, is seen here after her Ontario Review Board hearing at the Brockville Mental Health Centre. (Waubgeshig Rice/CBC)

The family of a mentally ill Cree woman is hopeful she'll get more culturally relevant treatment after a provincial review board recommended moving her from a facility in Brockville, Ont., back to her home province of Saskatchewan.

Marlene Carter, 44, has been a patient at the Brockville Mental Health Centre since the summer of 2014, when she was moved from the Regional Psychiatric Centre in Saskatoon after assaulting guards there.

At an Ontario Review Board hearing this week, her advocates argued she needs mental health treatment that caters to her Cree background, including smudge ceremonies and cultural teachings, and that she should be closer to her family and home community of Onion Lake Cree Nation, Sask.

The board agreed to make an initial recommendation to move her back to Saskatchewan, with a detailed official decision to come on where exactly she'll be placed and how she'll be treated.



Marlene Carter, left, and her sister Peggy Harper, originally from Onion Lake Cree Nation, Sask., following review board's decision to send Marlene to an institution in Saskatchewan. (Waubgeshig Rice/CBC)

"It's just an overwhelming feeling," said Carter's sister, Peggy Harper, who flew in from Onion Lake for the hearing in Brockville.

"Understanding that Marlene is coming back to Saskatchewan, that there will be resources available to her, because there are people wanting to work with her, especially the cultural aspects."

Algonquin elder Albert Dumont, who's worked with Carter for more than a year in Brockville to help connect her to her Cree background, agrees.

Treatment included electroshock therapy

"It was the first time that she'd smugged in many years," he said, following the hearing. "And she talked about her dreams, and we talked together about healing and about maybe becoming a better person, a stronger person."

Although where she ends up in Saskatchewan is still up in the air, he hopes she still has access to cultural treatments, and he wants provincial health and justice officials there to remember the "many, many traumas that she experienced."

After enduring sexual and physical abuse as a child, Carter attempted suicide several times, and eventually fell into drug and alcohol abuse and crime, spending most of her adult life in prison and mental health institutions.

She has a deep scar on her forehead from repeatedly banging her head on hard surfaces while in custody. Treatment for her mental illness has included electroshock therapy.

The hearing was Harper's first time seeing her sister in years.

"To see ... the extent of the injuries that she's inflicted on herself has left me speechless," she said.



Carter has been in custody at the Brockville Mental Health Centre since August 2014. (Waubgeshig Rice, CBC News)

During her time in the Brockville facility, Carter attacked several nurses and staff, most recently on Jan. 6, and there are still two outstanding assault charges against her.

While she sat restrained in a wheelchair near her sister and her lawyer, five staff members read victim impact statements at the hearing, detailing post-traumatic stress following Carter's attacks, and fear of returning to work in the forensic treatment unit.

"Our hearts go out to anyone who's ever suffered any trauma because of Marlene's actions," said Dumont.

"They're often assaults that are generated when she's trying to stop someone from stopping her, historically, hurting herself, or when they were trying to put her in restraints or do other kinds of usual forcible treatments," said Kim Pate, of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies.

Pate, who's known Carter for more than two decades, is encouraged by the board's recommendation.

"There's some disagreement as to where's the best place for her," she said. "We think she should be in her community with the appropriate supports: therapeutic supports, cultural supports, and that she could be there, and that would not pose a risk to public safety."

During breaks in the review board proceedings, Carter talked casually with her sister in Cree, her first language, and turned to acknowledge her stepmother, watching via video link from Saskatoon.



'The Cree for her was good'

"I think that Cree for her was good," said Harper. "It was a long time, she said, before she had spoke with anybody. And it felt good to speak in her language."

Carter spoke briefly with her supporters and reporters in the hall of the mental health centre once the hearing adjourned.

She said she was "happy" with the recommendation to go back to Saskatchewan, and added that she looked forward to being out of restraints.

She has three sons, in their teens and 20s, who live in British Columbia.

"Hopefully in the future, once there's less restraints, that she can actually be integrated back into the community with visits, getting to know her family, getting connected with people who she is related to, I think that's really important for Marlene," said Harper.

"To date, the only family she's had has been institutions."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/marlene-carter-brockville-saskatchewan-mental-health-1.3412228>

First Nations call for action on youth suicides

By [Alan S. Hale](#), The Daily Press

Thursday, January 21, 2016 9:11:42 EST PM



TIMMINS - Suicide and its devastating effect on First Nation communities dominated discussion at the Nishnawbe Aski Nation's (NAN) Winter Chiefs Assembly held in Thunder Bay this week after the Mushkegowuk Council released the findings of the People's Inquiry Into Our Suicide Pandemic, which began studying the problem in 2013. According to the Mushkegowuk report, about 600 children and young people from local reserves contemplated, attempted and too often succeeded in taking their own lives since 2009. The problem extends well past the eight First Nations covered by the Mushkegowuk Council, with children taking their own lives in communities across Northern Ontario, including a 10-year-old girl from Bearskin Lake First Nation last month.

NAN Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler is now calling on the provincial and federal governments to create a Special Emergency Task Force to deal with the crisis.

“Leaders from across NAN territory stand united today in their call for a focused task force to take immediate action to stop the growing epidemic of suicide that continues to devastate so many of our communities,” said Fiddler in a statement. “Hundreds of our young people, some as young as 10 years old, are taking their lives while living in poverty, hopelessness and despair and without immediate action there will be no end in sight. This crisis is a national tragedy and the time for action is now.”

Jonathan Solomon, the Grand Chief of the Mushkegowuk Council – which has an overlapping membership with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation – was at the chiefs assembly this week to present the Peoples Inquiry’s findings and recommendations on how to begin addressing the issue.

“This is something that is really devastating to First Nation communities, not only in Mushkegowuk but across the NAN territory. There really seems to be one happening every two weeks,” lamented Solomon. “Our concern is that the age of people committing suicide is getting younger and younger.”

During the summer of 2013, the inquiry’s five commissioners travelled to all eight member First Nations of the Mushkegowuk Council to speak with the people there about suicide in their communities at public meetings. In all, they spoke to 283 people. Some meetings were attracting as few as 10 participants, while the meeting in Attawapiskat had 103.

Because the average age of participants at the public meetings was 55, the Mushkegowuk Council ordered another meeting held in March of 2015 specifically targeted at gathering information from youth.

The final report identified a total of 16 key issues which need to be addressed in order to start dealing with the problem of suicide: Residential schools, sexual abuse, substance abuse, parenting skills, identity and culture, lateral violence, communication, resources and funding, bullying, mental health, gay and two-spirited community, family violence, housing, education, health, and unresolved grief.

The report addresses each of these issues in turn with lists of recommendations for leaders, communities and individuals.

Solomon said that all these issues from bullying to the deplorable living conditions in some communities are leading to a feeling of hopelessness. Beginning to address those problems, said Solomon, has to begin at the community level.

“There are issues that need to be dealt with from community; they need to start at home and go all the way up to the leadership. Now that we have this report, communities need to lay it all out,” said the Mushkegowuk Grand Chief. “How do you address cyber bullying, how do you address family violence, how to begin to end the inter-generational effects of residential school? Sexual abuse, physical abuse; all these things need to be acted upon at the community level, and I think the community people need to come together to address them.”

Solomon said the advantage of performing a “bottom-up” inquiry into the issue of suicide is that recommendations in the report are designed so action can be started locally and taken as high up the governmental ladder as it needs to be to obtain supports for community action.

Solomon would like to see a regional strategy created by the Mushkegowuk Council to address family violence and revive the idea of the “family circle” where the parents are responsible for protecting everything inside their circle.

The provincial and federal governments also have a role to play, said Solomon.

“I’m an Ontario citizen and a Canadian citizen. Canada and Ontario have a duty toward the wellbeing of their citizens. So we need to start engaging these governments. Perhaps what we are missing is a family healing centre, where families who have been affected by a tragic loss can go,” said Solomon. “All that unaddressed grief they go through every day is starting to impact the children.

“Even the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations talk about family healing centres. So I think that’s one area we need to go. There are centres for drugs and alcohol, but nothing for families.”

Direct Link: <http://www.timminspress.com/2016/01/21/first-nations-call-for-action-on-youth-suicides>

Cancer rates skyrocketing in Arctic, especially Canada

By **Marc Montgomery** | english@rcinet.ca

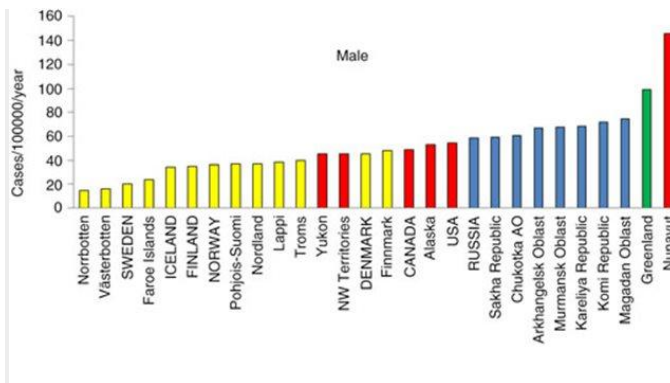
Tuesday 26 January, 2016

Cancer was once a very rare occurrence among indigenous people in the far north. Now almost everyone has experienced a death of a loved one from the disease.

A new international study shows that in the circumpolar region, rates of cancer have increased dramatically in the period from 1989 to 2008.

It also shows that Inuit are “at extreme risk” for lung and colorectal cancers, as well as some other relatively rare cancers.

The study was published in the International Journal of Circumpolar Health, and entitled “Cancer among circumpolar populations: an emerging public health concern”



Age-standardized incidence rates of lung cancer among men in the Arctic States and their northern regions, 2000–2009. Female graph shows very similar results. Note: AO=autonomous okrug. All 8 Arctic States (in capital letters) and most of their northern regions are included in the chart – blue refer to Russia and its northern regions, yellow to the Nordic countries and their northern regions, red to Canada and USA and their northern regions, and green to Greenland. © Kue Young, Kai Wong, et al

The study involved researchers from the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta in Canada, the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Anchorage, USA; the Department of Clinical Oncology, Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen, Denmark; and the Department of Public Health, University of Helsinki, in Finland

Much of the problem appears to be due to a very high rate of smoking, which is several times higher than the smoking rate in southern areas.

Statistics Canada puts the rate at over 62 percent in Nunavut, and 60 percent among the Dene of the Northwest Territories, while the national average of Canada is now down around 18 percent.



Poster showing historic photo of an Inuit woman and baby alongside a current photo of an Inuit woman and baby. For the past five years, the territory has been working on campaigns about the harms of tobacco. Pregnant women and new mothers are some of their key targets. © Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC

A recent survey found for example that nine out of ten pregnant women in Canada's northern territory of Nunavut smoke in spite of clear warnings of the health danger to themselves and unborn children.

Quoted in the National Post newspaper Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the national Inuit organization says, ““Smoking provides huge challenges to our health system, and it has huge societal impacts””.



Vikki Amaaq started smoking at age 11, Smoked during her first pregnancy and is now pregnant with her second child. She said that in her home community of Igloolik, it's normal for pregnant women to smoke. She smokes approximately 12 cigarettes a day © Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC

Lead author of Kue Young, dean of the University of Alberta's public health department, it found cancers that once were rarely seen in the far north, including breast and colorectal, are an increasing concern generally.

The report concludes that “from a global perspective, the circumpolar Inuit and Athabaskan/Dene have rates for several cancer sites that exceed all other regions in the world. An increasing trend is also evident, and represents a change from a few decades ago when the risk of cancer was generally below that of non-indigenous populations in the same region.”

Direct Link: <http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2016/01/26/cancer-rates-skyrocketing-in-arctic-especially-canada/>

St. Paul's Hospital tackling 'growing crisis' of heart condition in first nations with hiring of new chair

'Vulnerable children are being exposed to social circumstances that predict chronic illness'

By The Early Editinon, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 26, 2016 7:34 AM PT Last Updated: Jan 26, 2016 7:34 AM PT



St. Paul's Hospital introduced the position of chair of First Nations Health Authority chair of heart health and wellness in partnership with Simon Fraser University (Joe Mabel)

[St. Paul's Hospital](#) now has a research chair dedicated exclusively to the heart health of B.C.'s Aboriginal population.

"Heart health is what I would characterize as a growing crisis," said Dr. Jeff Reading, now the [First Nations Health Authority](#) chair in heart health and wellness at St. Paul's, and himself a member of the Mohawk nation from Ontario.

B.C.'s indigenous population has higher occurrences of uncontrolled blood pressure, obesity and high cholesterol, he said.



Dr. Jeff Reading is the First Nation Health Authority's inaugural chair of heart health and wellness at St. Paul's Hospital. (SFU.com)

Reading's research — in partnership with [Simon Fraser University's faculty of health sciences](#) — will focus on ways to reduce cases of hypertension, heart attack, stroke and diabetes.

"We believe Dr. Reading is the perfect candidate to bring a distinct First Nations perspective to the clinical, academic and social determinants at work in this area," said CEO of the First Nations Health Authority Joe Gallagher in a statement.

Treating the root of the issue

Reading will focus on the root causes of poor health outcomes for First Nations.

"The multigenerational traumas of residential schools experience and the whole impact of colonization has put many indigenous people in the social circumstances of poverty, and poverty determines health across a range of health indicators," Reading said.

"To address the issue, there's the health services issues, access to care etcetera, and the preventative measures, but there's also the end of poverty, the idea that vulnerable children are being exposed to social circumstances that predict chronic illness."

The provincial government says Reading's research will help shape health care planning.

"This research will inform and guide how health care is provided for First Nations, promoting better health outcomes," said B.C. Health Minister Terry Lake in a statement.

"We must learn from each other, and by supporting research into heart health for First Nations, we're breaking ground on a new era of personalized health care," Lake's statement said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/growing-crisis-in-first-nations-health-1.3419304>

SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL SHOOTING HIGHLIGHTS VIOLENCE FACING INDIGENOUS CANADIANS

BY [MAX KUTNER](#) ON 1/27/16 AT 7:54 AM



The recent school shooting in La Loche, Saskatchewan, hints at the issues facing Canada's indigenous communities. Many residents in La Loche are members of the Dene Nation, some members of which are pictured here. CHRIS ARSENAULT/THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION/REUTERS

For years, Canada's indigenous people have dealt with high levels of unemployment, poverty, substance abuse, suicide and violence. Yet indigenous leaders and mental health experts say the recent deadly school shooting in La Loche, Saskatchewan, has cast a wider spotlight on those issues—especially among indigenous youth—and thrust them into the national conversation.

On January 22, police say a 17-year-old gunman opened fire at a school in La Loche, killing four. The suspect is now in custody. Police have not released his name or other identifying information because of youth privacy laws, but Chief Bobby Cameron of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations says the suspect is indigenous. (Two additional people with knowledge of the suspect confirmed his account.) Census records show that 90 percent of the 2,600 residents there speak primarily indigenous languages. Most belong to the Dene Nation or the Métis people.

School shootings are rare in Canada, and the incident in La Loche was just the third major one in a largely indigenous area in North America in more than a decade. But as residents of La Loche—and the nation—search for answers, some mental health experts say it is important to understand the shootings in the context of the issues plaguing Canada's indigenous people.

“Rather than pick apart his individual life and look for clues and hints,” says Claire Crooks, an associate professor at the University of Western Ontario who has worked on indigenous mental health programs, people should consider the “larger pattern and problem of [indigenous] children who have been exposed to violence and hopelessness.”

Cameron agrees. “This is not just one isolated event,” he says. “You just wonder when or if this is going to happen again and how severe is it going to be?”

The challenges plaguing indigenous communities are especially hard on young people, who face alarmingly high rates of violence. According to research cited by the Canadian government, young indigenous people between the ages of 15 and 34 are two and a half times more likely to be victims of violence (such as domestic and gang violence, bullying

and sexual assault) than indigenous people who are 35 and older. Among indigenous people ages 15 to 24, just under half are victims of violence; for nonindigenous people in that age bracket, the figure is 26.8 percent. The statistics are especially troubling given that more than half of Canada's indigenous population is younger than 25, according to a 2008 government report.

Mental health experts say exposure to trauma and violence can be a self-reinforcing cycle. Young indigenous people on reservations are accused of committing homicide 11 times as often as Canadian youth elsewhere. And they experience incarceration and probation at much higher rates than the general population.

Experiencing childhood trauma can also lead to suicide attempts, which researchers consider a form of violence. In some indigenous communities, young people die by suicide at a rate six times higher than their nonindigenous counterparts. The suicide rate in the northern Saskatchewan area, where La Loche is located, is three times higher than it is elsewhere in the province, according to a local health authority report from 2011 and 2012.

The Canadian government has recently sought to improve conditions for indigenous groups. In 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised to increase funding for First Nations schools, and the government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission declared that the country's residential school program for indigenous youth constituted "cultural genocide."

Chief Cameron believes his communities need more wellness and healing centers, job incentive programs and sports and recreation centers. "The commitment is there, the political will and support is there," he says. "It's just a matter of implementing these recommendations and investing in our youth."

But not all La Loche residents think that good will come from the attention their community is now receiving. "We, like many others, have our burdens and our struggles, but together we stand strong and proud of our people," Perry Herman, a La Loche resident who has spoken about knowing the suspected gunman, says in a Facebook message. "Don't label our people and our community because of this."

Direct Link: <http://www.newsweek.com/la-loche-saskatchewan-school-shooting-indigenous-violence-419498>

Inuit Smoking Rates in Canada Are Worse Than the National Average in the 1950s

By Jake Kivanc

January 28, 2016 | 9:25 am

Canada's North is facing a health crisis, as skyrocketing cancer rates amongst its Indigenous peoples are far and away the highest in the world, according to a new international study.

That result is, in part, due a total failure of the all levels of government to curb smoking in the North.

The report found that the smoking rate amongst Canada's Innu and Inuit was 63 per cent. That's a number that towers over the national Canadian smoking rate of around 18 per cent. That's just part of the problem. Recently, researchers found that [9 of 10](#) pregnant women in Nunavut smoke.

By comparison, the national [smoking rate](#) in the 1950s was 68.9 per cent for men and 38.2 per cent for women, prior to the boom of tobacco regulation that pushed down those rates in most of the West.

That sky-high smoking rate correspond to a spike in lung cancer rates, with 300 people receiving a lung cancer diagnosis in Nunavut between 2000 and 2009 — giving the 30,000-person territory a rate that is double that of Greenland, which had the next-highest prevalence of lung cancer of those areas studied in the report..

The [international study](#), which studied health outcomes for Inuit in the Arctic Circle — which includes parts of Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, and the United States — found that cancer rates all around the Arctic Circle were disproportionately high. It, however, found that problem especially prevalent in Canada, where those numbers have been climbing since 1989.

Inuit are the Indigenous people to Canada's three northern territories — the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut — while Innu hail from Labrador.

According to Rob Cunningham, senior policy analyst at the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS), the lack of tobacco regulation among Indigenous communities has been a huge contributor to the popularity of smoking, noting that the high rates of lung cancer have been "a cause for concern" for some time.

Most notably, however, Cunningham says the smoking rate for Indigenous peoples has stayed strong because of the fact that things such as flavoured tobacco bans and smoke free zones don't exist on reserves, although most Inuit and Innu live off-reserve. That leaves blame at the feet of the territorial governments — in Nunavut, for example, territorial taxes on smoking exist, but flavored tobacco is still legal.

Across Canada, cigarette prices generally stay the same — \$8 to \$10 CAD per pack — but Cunningham told VICE News that one of the main problems in Northern Canada is that contraband cigarettes are easily obtainable and dodge hard-hitting tobacco taxes.

When contacted by VICE News for comment, a spokesperson for Health Canada said the agency is aware of the issue and is taking steps to lower tobacco use in Indigenous communities.

The spokesperson pointed to the [\\$22 million the government has been pegged to spend](#) between 2012 and 2017 on combating non-ceremonial tobacco use in Indigenous communities. Among working with Indigenous communities to find a compromise on decreasing smoking rates, the plan includes the expansion of tobacco regulation and educational initiatives.

Ceremonial use of tobacco is important part of Indigenous culture that dates back to pre-colonial days as a spiritual practice. Cunningham notes that while it's hard to determine if ceremonial smoking has reinforced recreational usage of tobacco, smoking culture is generally more accepted in Indigenous communities.

The crisis has motivated Nunavut to act. The territorial government recently committed \$1.5 million to combatting smoking.

Statistics Canada has looked at this trend before, with their last report finding that [21 percent of all Inuit people in Canada's arctic died from lung cancer or respiratory-related diseases](#). The overall life expectancy of Indigenous people is 10 years shorter than the Canadian average of 80.6 years.

The troubling lung cancer statistics are just a part of the problem. Last year, [a study](#) revealed that lung cancer and cervical cancer was highly common among all Indigenous populations in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States.

Direct Link: <https://news.vice.com/article/inuit-smoking-rates-in-canada-are-worse-than-the-national-average-in-the-1950s>

Aboriginal History

Special Screening of Documentary About Government Segregation of First Nations

London, Ontario / (CFPL AM) AM 980

[Megan McPhaden](#)

Posted: January 24, 2016 09:54 am



A special screening of the documentary ‘The Pass System’ is being shown on Monday at Huron University College (HUC). The free screening is open to members of the public and is being held ahead of the documentary’s Toronto premiere. ‘The Pass System’ explores the dark underbelly of Canadian history. Director and Producer Alex Williams explores the use of a ‘pass’ to restrict First Nations from leaving reserves – for any reason. The system, which was enforced up to the 1930s, was used to racially segregate First Nations people.

After the screening the audience will have the opportunity for a question and answer period with the director. The free screening is open to the public and will take place at Huron University College in room V214 on Monday January 25th at 7 p.m.

“Huron University College has a long history in southwestern Ontario, particularly among and within nearby Indigenous communities,” said Dr. Tom Peace, assistant professor of Canadian History at HUC.

Direct Link: <http://www.am980.ca/2016/01/24/documentary-explores-government-abuses-of-first-nations/>

Justice minister won’t rule out Gustafsen Lake inquiry but says it’s not a priority

IAN BAILEY

The Globe and Mail

Published Saturday, Jan. 23, 2016 8:52PM EST

Last updated Sunday, Jan. 24, 2016 1:36AM EST

The federal justice minister is not ruling out an inquiry into the 1995 Gustafsen Lake standoff between native activists and the RCMP in British Columbia but suggests it’s not a top priority now, given a busy political agenda.

The issue around the infamous confrontation that resonates in B.C. to this day arose twice in audience questions Saturday after Jody Wilson-Raybould delivered a speech at a Simon Fraser University forum – her first such major event since being appointed justice minister last fall.

Pressed on the issue of an inquiry into the 31-day confrontation, Ms. Wilson-Raybould said she had received correspondence from William Jones Ignace, also known as Wolverine, calling for the federal action.

"I am aware of the situation and have received correspondence in that regard. I am, in no way, pushing it away as not important. I certainly will give the necessary consideration," Ms. Wilson-Raybould said, responding to a question from Mr. Ignace's niece, who noted he is not doing well.

She noted: "I acknowledge Wolverine. I am sorry to hear he is not doing well."

But she said all ministers have been given public mandate letters setting out priorities that have to be addressed, suggesting they are focused on current priorities laid out by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The 1995 Gustafsen Lake standoff began when First Nations protesters occupied land near 100 Mile House they said was sacred, prompting the RCMP to deploy about 400 armed officers. Although the Mounties fired thousands of rounds of ammunition, only one person was injured and no one killed in the 31-day standoff.

Earlier this month, Mr. Ignace, now 83, wrote to Mr. Trudeau and Ms. Wilson-Raybould about the issue., suggesting the standoff "cast a deep shadow on the relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous nations, which to this day has not been adequately investigated."

He added: "An inquiry into the Ts'Peten (Gustafsen Lake) standoff would demonstrate that the Canadian government is truly committed to a new era of respectful nation-to-nation relationships in which the wrongs of the past are thoroughly understood and acknowledged, ensuring that threats, intimidation, defamation and force are never again used against Indigenous people in Canada."

Saturday's speech, a subsequent moderated discussion and questions from the audience were an opportunity for reflection after several whirlwind months that have seen the former prosecutor and regional chief of the B.C. Assembly of First Nations become Canada's first aboriginal justice minister.

Her expansive 30-minute speech touched on the place of First Nations in Canada, past, present and future.

She said the exclusion of First Nations people as partners in Confederation has had "far-reaching implications" since then.

The work of reconciliation today is, in many ways, at its core, about rectifying this exclusion."

She noted that her boss, Mr. Trudeau, has committed to a new nation-to-nation relationship.

Ms. Wilson-Raybould said she remembered as a "very, very young girl" in 1983 watching her father, native leader Bill Wilson, verbally joust with then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau, father to the current prime minister, who convinced her to join a political party for the first time and run for a seat in Parliament.

Mr. Wilson was vice president of the Native Council of Canada, attending a first ministers' conference.

At one point, Mr. Wilson said one of his daughters would become prime minister. Mr. Trudeau replied: "Tell them I'll stick around until they're ready."

Ms. Wilson-Raybould remembered watching the conference on TV. She was in her Grade 6 class. She recalled the historic importance of the moment, her father's pride in his children.

However, she added: "I was really embarrassed to sit in my class and watch this and everybody was looking at me, but for my sister and I and a lot of our cousins, we were taken to meetings and told to sit there and not say a word but to listen and learn.

"Did I want to be the prime minister at the time? No. I think it was our father being so optimistic and thinking: 'I have fantastic kids and we have instilled values in them to know that you stick to your values and the decisions that you make and if you work hard, you can achieve whatever you want to achieve'."

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/justice-minister-wont-rule-out-gustafsen-lake-inquiry-but-says-its-not-a-priority/article28363257/>

This Week in History: Mungo Martin House in Thunderbird Park

Posted By: [Veronica Cooperon](#): January 23, 2016 In: [News](#), [This Week in History](#)

Victoria's [Thunderbird Park](#) opened in 1941.

But, according to Royal BC Museum Curator of Ethnology Martha Black, while it displayed spectacular works from various First Nations, it was anything but authentic.

"The things themselves, the objects, were authentic, but they were put together just in a jumble," explains Black.

"There were houses that had Kwakwaka'wakw designs on the front, supported by Haida roof beams, with Nuuchah-Nulth poles beside them. It had no relationship to any authentic building."

And so, nine years later, in 1952, Mungo Martin was hired as chief carver of the 'Totem Preservation Program.'

"He was hired by the Museum...and he came here and re-did Thunderbird Park," says Black.

"In 1953, the house that he built, Wawadit'la – the Mungo Martin House – which is currently in the park, was opened with an authentic ceremony...and they had two different ceremonies."

One ceremony was held for First Nations to attend, and another for the public. The First Nations ceremony was hugely significant, explains Black.

"The opening of Wawadit'la in 1953 was the first public potlatch after the ban against the potlatch was dropped from the Indian Act...and it happened, interestingly enough, in Victoria." And on the grounds of the Royal BC Museum.

Mungo Martin House is still in use today

"It is used for First Nations cultural ceremonies.

“People apply to use it, and the applications go to Mungo Martin’s descendants in Fort Rupert, who approve or disapprove – it’s not really up to the museum, we just process it.”

Martin was 72 years old when he accepted the challenge to redesign Thunderbird Park, a vital contribution to the growing city of Victoria.

“He was a real bridge between the colonial non-aboriginal populations and the First Nation cultures.” stresses Black.

Helping to spread education and understanding about the rich culture of the First Nation population.

Direct Link: <http://www.cheknews.ca/week-history-mungo-martin-house-thunderbird-park-132203/>

Stephen Hume: Archeology student publishes paper on ancient, industrial-scale First Nations fishery

BY STEPHEN HUME, VANCOUVER SUN JANUARY 26, 2016



The remains of a large-scale First Nations fishery at low tide.

England’s monarchs were sacrificing to Woden and persecuting Christian missionaries when First Nations managed a vast, highly-productive, industrial-scale fish harvesting complex in the estuary of the Courtenay River.

At first, the elaborate arrangement of 300 ingenious traps on the sandy flats of the river mouth harvested herring, which still mass to spawn off the east coast of Vancouver Island every March.

But 700 years ago, perhaps in response to climate change, the technology was altered to exploit pink, chum, coho, chinook and possibly sockeye salmon.

Highly coordinated traps equal in technological sophistication to contemporary commercial fishing traps, enabled the operators to regulate escapement of spawning stocks and maintain abundance, precisely the sustainable resource management model we strive for today.

We know all this because Nancy Greene, a mature student at Malaspina College (it has since become Vancouver Island University), took a break from dreary course work surveying archaeological research in the Comox Valley one grey day in 2002.

Greene decided to visit a nearby site once excavated by Katherine Capes, a legendary early female archaeologist she had just been reading about.

The tide was extraordinarily low. Greene and her husband, David McGee, strolled there among the beach pools and seaweed of the exposed flats.

Greene noticed peculiar knobs of driftwood protruding from the sand. She stooped to examine one. It looked like the work of human hands. At that moment, she had an epiphany.

“I saw stakes everywhere ... just everywhere I looked,” Greene told me not long after. “The more I saw, the more I realized that this was vast. I didn’t even know what to call them. I didn’t know they were called alignments. But I realized its potential importance as an archaeological site.”

Greene was looking at what may be the largest prehistoric archaeological feature on the Northwest Coast.

From that moment, Greene knew what her college project would be. She would map part of the site, locate each stake, record its position and, if possible, determine its age.

She had no inkling of the scale of her undertaking. It would take Greene, McGee and Roderick Heitzmann — a retired Parks Canada archaeologist who later came on board to advise on the arcane technical rules for writing up their findings as a scientific paper — a full decade. From 2003 to 2013, using precision surveying equipment, Greene and McGee mapped and recorded 13,000 of the 200,000 artifacts she now estimates the site holds.

It was exhaustive and exhausting work. To complete mapping, Greene recruited volunteers for a task that demanded meticulous detail and accuracy, but was hampered because the whole site is submerged for much of each day.

Her husband signed on. Mike Trask, an amateur paleontologist famous for discovering the West Coast’s first fossil elasmosaur (a long-necked, fish-eating reptile from the

Cretaceous period) stepped up. Steve Mitchell, a professional surveyor, volunteered expertise and specialized equipment.

Next came the matter of paying for expensive carbon-dating tests to determine the age of organic material by measuring its radioactive decay.

Greene's community also stepped up. Comox Valley Project Watershed Society provided funds. Comox Valley Regional District chipped in. The municipalities of Comox, Courtenay and Cumberland, the federal Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the K'omoks First Nation, Hamatla Treaty Society, which includes the Wewaikay of Cape Mudge, the Weiweikum of Campbell River, the Kwiaka, the Tlowitsis and the K'omoks, all helped.

So did 27 individual and business donors, organized by then-Comox Valley Regional District director Jim Gillis into the "Stick in the Mud Club." His idea was to mobilize a cross-section of the community as a non-traditional way of funding important local archaeological research.

Greene, McGee and Heitzmann have just published their research in the prestigious Canadian Journal of Archaeology. It documents a major discovery in Canada's prehistoric landscape. Their paper charts with astonishing detail the immensity of the site, from defensive fortifications to huge refuse middens stretching three kilometres along adjacent shorelines and, of course, the huge geometric designs of curves, angles and parallels of the traps themselves.

Perhaps most fascinating among the many astonishing findings is how the technology — it was designed to capture fish at every stage of the tidal cycle — evolved over at least 1,400 years of continuous use as its operators adapted it to exploit climate-driven changes in the fishery.

"We have taken the research to a whole new level, which allowed us to critically analyze the data and draw some significant conclusions about this immense aboriginal fishery," Greene says. "Our research is the first of its kind to study in detail these previously unknown marine fishing practices and it is the first indication of a long-term, sustainable, possibly industrial-scale aboriginal fishery on the Northwest Coast."

Call it a triumph of citizen science.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/health/stephen+hume+archeology+student+publishes+paper+ancient+industrial+scale+first+nations+fishery/11677919/story.html>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

First Nations chief from B.C. calls for urgent effort to save indigenous languages

John Edwards says extinction of indigenous languages is going unnoticed

By Edith M. Lederer, The Associated Press Posted: Jan 25, 2016 12:56 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 25, 2016 12:56 PM ET



Grand Chief Edward John, right, and British Columbia Premier Christy Clark listen during a gathering with cabinet ministers and First Nations leaders in September 2014. John is calling for urgent efforts to revive indigenous languages, and says their extinction is going unnoticed. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darryl Dyck)

A First Nations chief from British Columbia is calling for urgent efforts to revive indigenous languages, saying their extinction is going unnoticed while the world focuses on the preservation of cultural heritage sites.

Edward John, a member of the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, told a news conference that ancient wonders are important but indigenous languages are "the essential component of cultural heritage" and should get international attention and support to ensure their survival.

John spoke Thursday at the end of a three-day meeting of indigenous language experts at U.N. headquarters on revitalizing many of the estimated 6,000 to 7,000 languages spoken by indigenous peoples around the world.

"The priority focus that I hear from all of the experts is, create fluent speakers," he said. "That's what you need to do. How do you do it? That's the discussion taking place."

"There's been a large focus on literacy, developing books and calendars and dictionaries" in indigenous languages, John said, "but not as much of an effort in fluency."

John pointed to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's address in May 2011 to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues where he said: "Today, one indigenous language dies every two weeks. Indigenous cultures are threatened with extinction."

What's needed urgently is a commitment from every government to identify the indigenous languages in their country and the number and age of speakers so that a global map of where they are can be drawn up for the first time, he said. Then, the focus must be on revitalizing those with fewer speakers and finding the resources to keep languages from becoming extinct.

"We know there are some languages where there are less than a handful of speakers left, and when they're gone that language is gone and everything — everything about that culture and that heritage is gone as well," John said.

Tatjana Degai, an ethnic Itelman from Kamchatka on Russia's Pacific coast, said her people's language "is severely endangered."

"There are only five elderly speakers left, all of them female speakers, about 70 years old," she said. "There are about 10 to 15 middle-aged speakers who grew up hearing the language but don't consider themselves speakers."

Degai, who is trying to help keep the language alive, said Itelman is taught in only one school, and for just 40 minutes a week.

"We appreciate that Russia is developing legislation in relation to indigenous language but we also think that it is not enough for our language to survive," she said.

Degai said Itelman is not the only language in trouble — 40 of the 47 recognized indigenous peoples in Russia are from the north, Siberia and the Far East, and most of their languages "are at the brink of extinction."

Amy Kalili, a native Hawaiin who heads an education organization promoting fluency in the Hawaiian language, said that in middle of the last century there were perhaps 30 speakers under the age of 18. But she said there was "a cultural renaissance" in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and now schools are educating 3,000 students a year in Hawaiian.

"People are passionate about not letting language die," Kalili said, and not just in Hawaii.

She said the Maoris in New Zealand not only get education in their own language but they have government-funded Maori language radio and television channels.

John, who is grand chief of the Tl'azt'en Nation in British Columbia, said he attended an Indian residential school and was banned from speaking Dene, a language also spoken in Alaska and the northwestern and southwestern United States by Native Americans.

He said smart phones and technology should become tools to help reach young people today their indigenous languages.

Google sent an expert to this week's meeting, he said, and "we will reach out to all willing partners to help us in this gigantic effort of revitalization."

John said recommendations from this week's meeting will be presented to the Permanent Forum meeting in May, and then to the U.N. Economic and Social Council in July.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/first-nations-chief-urgent-effort-indigenous-language-1.3418475>

Reclaiming Cree language lands teacher on shortlist for \$1M award



Saskatoon Cree teacher Belinda Daniels is on the short list for a global award worth \$1 million, for her dedication in passing on the language. (Belinda Daniels/Submitted to CBC)

Sunday January 24, 2016

Belinda Daniels didn't grow up speaking her Cree language, an absence that always made her feel unnatural.

"I was raised by my grandparents and at the time my grandparents only spoke Cree to each other," explained the 42-year-old from Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Sask.

"They did not want me to speak Cree because they did not want me to go through the same type of harm, punishment [and] ridicule they suffered from in regards to residential schools."

Now Daniels teaches Cree, or Nehiyâwewin, at a Saskatoon high school, as well as at the university level.



The Global Teacher Prize is awarded annually to an "exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession." (Varkey Gems Foundation)

Her efforts have put her on the short list for a global award worth \$1 million for her dedication in passing on the language.

The Global Teacher Prize is given to an "exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession," according to the Varkey Foundation website. She is one of 50 teachers and the only Canadian to make the short list from 8,000 nominees all over the world. The winner will be announced in March in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Reclaiming her traditional language

Daniels was first inspired to reclaim her language when she worked as an administrative assistant at a high school where everyone spoke Cree.

"Initially, I wanted to be part of the conversation, the happenings in front of me. I've always felt a little bit excluded," she recalled.

Daniels signed up for some Cree courses at a university and said while her grandparents were taken aback by her determination, they were happy and surprised that they were offering classes at university.

Once on the language learning path, Daniels began asking her grandparents deeper questions about how the Cree language captures a different world view.

"I remember imagining my future and telling my grandparents this is what I was going to do when I grew up and this is what I'm going to have. My mooshum [grandfather] said 'ah Belinda, don't even talk about a future that you don't even know of.'" Daniels explained that it is considered bad luck to talk about the future.

"He goes, 'We don't know our future, only Creator does.' So, it's up to us to live in the moment and to be present every day."

Daniels said knowing the language even extends to how you view relationships with animals and nature.

"All of those things are alive and they're animate. This is where you get that connection towards our environment, towards our climate, towards nature and this is where you develop this huge respect for mother earth and that can only come from the language."

Language 'connection to who you are'

Daniels wasn't satisfied with simply learning the language. She wanted to pass it on to others.

She's been teaching Cree for the past 15 years. She even created a Nehiyaw Language Camp for new learners 11 years ago.

"I want to give that same passion, that same exuberance, that same pride for identity. I want to give that to my students and to my children."

She said cultural identity and language creates self-esteem and pride.

"When you have that connection to who you are and that connection to the land, it just gives you much more of an appreciation of where you come from."

This is the place Daniels said she comes from when teaching Cree, or Nehiyâwewin.

"Listen first. Listen for a long time. When you're listening for a long time, you'll develop an understanding of what is being said," she explained.

"If you're going to bring the pencil and the paper and the textbook into the classroom, well then, you may as well say goodbye to that language."

Daniels said it is no different than when babies are learning how to speak English, that parents coddle children in language, use repetition and teach small words at a time.

"They never brought you a pen or a pencil and paper and said 'this is how you say mommy and this is how you spell daddy.' We have to go back to that type of learning and

you never see a parent laugh at their child when they are trying to speak. We need to get back to that."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/lost-found-and-shared-indigenous-language-speakers-on-the-rise-1.3410203/reclaiming-cree-language-lands-teacher-on-shortlist-for-1m-award-1.3410769>

Q&A with Jack Saddleback: 'Excited about the future' for trans, gay, indigenous people

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 25, 2016 4:27 PM NT Last Updated: Jan 25, 2016 6:05 PM NT



Jack Saddleback will be speaking at Memorial University's Grenfell campus Monday evening. (Brian McHugh/CBC)

A motivational speaker is in Corner Brook Monday to speak about overcoming barriers in his experience as a Cree, two-spirit, transgender, gay man.

Jack Saddleback, who is also president of the student union at the University of Saskatchewan, will be giving a talk called "There are no closets in tipis" Monday afternoon at Memorial University's Grenfell campus.

But early Monday morning, Saddleback was in CBC studios speaking with the *Corner Brook Morning Show*.

Here's Saddleback's conversation with host Lindsay Bird.

Q. First off, you refer to yourself as two-spirit. What does that mean?

A. The term two-spirited was actually coined in 1990 in Winnipeg by a group of aboriginal individuals who wanted a term that acknowledged a historical acceptance of queer aboriginal people in First Nations

cultures. Hence the term two-spirited, which acknowledges the intertwined cultural and gender and sexual diversity of every individual.

Q. Your talk is called "There are no closets in tipis." What kind of message are you bringing to Grenfell?

A. Talking about the term two-spirited and looking at the historical acceptance of queer aboriginal people in First Nations cultures, I'm looking at first off the history side of things. And then for myself, with the role of residential schools in First Nations cultures, there has been a kind of a disconnect between that respect for all individuals regardless of their gender and sexual orientation due to a number of different events that have taken place over the years, which has created quite a rift in our First Nations cultures. That has included homophobia and transphobia.

For myself, being a person of many identities, that can be a struggle to go through my own community, but on top of that we're looking at the wider societal look of homosexual individuals, as well as transgender individuals, and the barriers that are taking place.

My talk is sort of my own story of overcoming these barriers. I'm not one to boast about anything, but it's been a large struggle throughout my life and I'm more than just grateful to finally be in a position to let people know there are some issues that are taking place in our society. We have to break those down. Regardless of your background, you can rise up and you can do whatever you want to do in your life and create change for the better.

Q. What kind of challenges did you face for you to get to this point?

A. Some of the struggles that I will be talking about today are regarding mental health issues. When you have a society that you're having to face, it can be quite daunting. And for my own life, I had succumbed to the pressures of our society and depression had taken quite a toll on myself growing up, and a subsequent suicide attempt, which I have been able to overcome because of my family and because of my community and because of my culture.

I would not be here if it wasn't for those individuals and for those ceremonies that kept me here and grounded with my people. So for myself, it's looking at mental health issues, it's advocating for that as well. There's also a lot of other things that we'll be talking about, but I don't want to spill the beans just yet.

Q. In terms of identity, that must have been a huge thing to be finding your own way and finding your identity in a society that maybe you don't see yourself reflected all that often.

A. Growing up, I think one of the largest issues that I found was that I could not see myself in society, I could not see a First Nations person in leadership roles or in large mainstream positions. I could not see myself as a gay individual, nor could I see myself as a trans individual.

So when I think about those struggles that I was going through, those struggles of isolation, of just not being able to connect with society, I think about those other young individuals who are out there right now wondering, 'Where do I fit in this world?'

And they do fit in this world. I fit in this world. Everyone does, but we have to break down those barriers that are in our society today to be able to encourage people to simply be and celebrate themselves.

Q. What kind of sense of that do you get for the future of people finding their identities going forward?

A. I am very much excited about the future. When we look at how far we've come within these past few generations, I can only imagine what it's going to be like in the generations to come.

And as a First Nations person, what I was grown up and taught time and time again from my elders was those seven generations before you, they love you regardless if they knew you. They didn't know what you were going to grow up to be, they didn't really care, but they loved you as a human being, and for myself that's what I have to keep in mind at all times: how can I be a loving ancestor to the seven generations to come?

Q. This talk is part of Indigenous Peoples Week at Grenfell, so what is it like to contribute to the conversation?

A. I'm super humbled by this. It's very interesting ... I'm personally just very humbled by the invitation to be out here, I look forward to meeting everyone and to learning a little bit more about Corner Brook and all the folks that are out here.

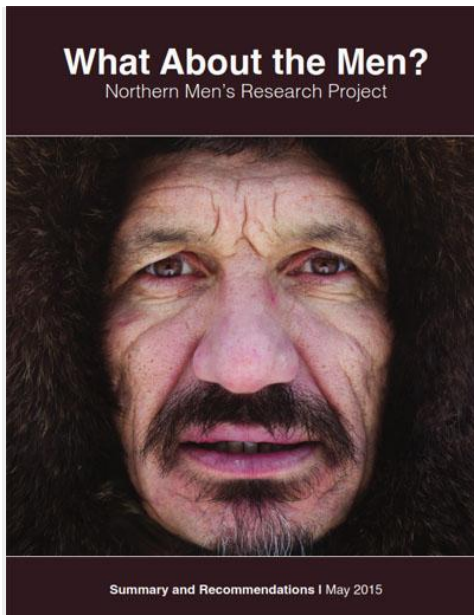
Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/jack-saddleback-grenfell-no-closets-in-tipis-1.3211670>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

Inuit men hindered in work, education and community engagement: report

"I would like to see men of all generations supported"

SARAH ROGERS, January 21, 2016 - 1:10 pm



Ilitaqsiniq-Nunavut Literacy Council recently published the report *What About Our Men?* The community-based research found that colonial trauma and racism are both major hurdles to learning and employment for northern Indigenous men, including Inuit.

Northern Indigenous men face a number of barriers to community engagement, employment and education, new Nunavut-based research finds — issues which men want broader support to help overcome.

The Northern Men's research project, initiated by the Ilitaqsiniq-Nunavut Literacy Council, recently published its findings gathered from more than four years of community-based research.

Working with literacy councils in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Newfoundland and Labrador during that time, researchers met with 200 First Nations, Métis and Inuit men to help identify those men's concerns.

"The impetus behind the research was to find out what some of the factors are that are contributing to men's engagement, or disengagement," said Shelley Tulloch, a University of PEI sociologist who helped prepare the report, "and secondly and what would be effective programs."

"But when we looked at other research, there was really nothing that identified men's experiences as distinct."

Tulloch notes that the men interviewed did not wish to put their issues above those of women. Respondents felt programming geared to northern Indigenous women was valuable and necessary, she said.

"But there was a feeling that men's voices weren't heard in certain areas," Tulloch said.

"And that was also expressed by Inuit women, who stressed the need for both Inuit men and women to be whole in order to build healthy communities."

The group's report, released earlier this month, found that colonial trauma and racism are both major hurdles to learning and employment for northern Indigenous men.

But resilience and success are often linked to those men who have pursued healing and a connection to the land, the report found.

Programs and policies that contribute to Indigenous men's participation are those that have been decolonized: designed to respect and integrate Indigenous culture and knowledge.

In speaking with men, researchers found a common theme in the respondents' own definition of success was what the T'licho call being "strong like two men," which is the ability to thrive in both traditional and modern lifestyles.

The report showed northern First Nations, Métis and Inuit men attached a practical and symbolic importance in taking part in cultural and subsistence practices — skills that may not necessarily have a monetary value attached.

Despite the traumatic legacy of residential schools, researchers also found men still value schooling as a means to secure work and care for one's family.

And most respondents rejected the myth of the disengaged man noting that federally-collected statistics do not reflect Indigenous values.

Statistics do paint a portrait of a gender gap, in Nunavut at least, where a public service report found 70 per cent of Inuit employed by the Government of Nunavut are female, compared to 30 per cent for Inuit men.

Nunavummiut who took part in the research confirmed that men are under-represented in other kinds of employment and education, the report noted.

In all the efforts Inuit women have made to become successful mothers, professionals, leaders, hunters and seamstresses, one question struck Rankin Inlet elder Quluaq Pilakapsi.

"What about our men?" asked Pilakapsi, who at the time worked as an Inuktitut resource development coordinator at Ilitaqsiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council.

"What About the Men" became the report's title.

"Men have gaps in their education as well as limited opportunities to learn... I would like to see men of all generations supported and uplifted to feel strong, confident, and capable," she said.

"What About the Men" makes some recommendations on how to better support men's livelihoods and well-being, by:

- broadening the sense of learning and work to reflect the range in northern Indigenous men's skill sets;
- opening wider spaces for men's voices to self-define. One suggestion in the report is to develop land camps and men's groups — a movement that is gradually expanding into Inuit communities;
- funding more infrastructure: the absence of basic facilities to host gatherings or training is a major barrier to programming in Nunavut, respondents said;
- decolonizing practices, including valuing and using Indigenous knowledge specific to men's expertise; and,

- increasing awareness and cross-cultural training for non-Indigenous people.

The research project took place from 2011-2015, and relied on 11 community-based researchers. In Nunavut, these included Noel Kaludjak, Quluq Pilakapsi and Adrianna Kusugak, who works for Ilitaqsiniq-Nunavut Literacy Council in Rankin Inlet.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_men_face_major_hurdles_to_work_education_and_community_engagemen/

Inuit org announces name, board members for training corporation

Inuit org executives fill five of seven board positions; GN holds two

STEVE DUCHARME, January 22, 2016 - 2:10 pm



Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna is one of only two Government of Nunavut board members sitting on the seven-member board of the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corp. (PHOTO BY STEVE DUCHARME)

Nunavut's new Inuit training corporation has an official Inuit-language name and a seven-member board of directors, following inaugural meetings held earlier this week, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. said Jan. 21 in a statement.

Dubbed the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corp., the organization will manage a \$175-million fund that the federal government gave NTI as part of an out-of-court settlement last year that ended a \$1 billion lawsuit alleging numerous breaches of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, including breaches of the federal government's Article 23 training and Inuit employment obligations.

The purpose of the corporation is to "provide training and skills acquisition programs to Nunavut Inuit for the purpose of enhancing the ability of Inuit to qualify for, obtain, retain or advance in employment," NTI said.

The five board members named by NTI are: NTI President Cathy Towtongie, NTI vice president James Eetoolook, Qikiqtani Inuit Association President PJ Akeeagok, Kivalliq Inuit Association President David Ningeongan and Kitikmeot Inuit Association President Stanley Anablak.

The two board members named by the Government of Nunavut are Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna and Education Minister Paul Quassa.

“Education and training are intrinsic to the ongoing and future success of Nunavut and its public service. The establishment of the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corp. is a significant step towards realizing our self-reliance,” said Taptuna is quoted as saying in the NTI release.

In its employment statistics for 2014, the GN reported that about 50 per cent of its employees are Inuit.

That’s a six per cent rise from the GN’s Inuit employment levels in 1999 — but still well short of the eventual goal set out in Article 23 of the NLCA: a proportion of Inuit employees that equals the proportion of Inuit in Nunavut’s population.

Right now, that would equal about 85 per cent of the GN workforce.

And the gap is even wider for beneficiaries in GN management positions: 24 per cent of middle management jobs and 21 per cent of senior management jobs.

In 2006, NTI launched its \$1 billion dollar lawsuit against the Government of Canada.

The eventual settlement in 2015 resulted in a \$255.5 million dollar payout by the federal government.

Of that, \$175 million will go to the new Inuit training organization — now the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corp.

Ottawa also agreed to spend an additional \$50 million to pay for Inuit training programs over the next eight years.

Ottawa also agreed to pay for a new Nunavut Inuit labour force analysis that will be conducted in conjunction with NTI and the GN.

“By getting this corporation up and running, NTI believes we will make substantial progress toward increasing Inuit employment in Nunavut by helping Inuit obtain work and advance in all areas of the workforce, from administrative to professional designations,” Towtongie said in the release.

At the time of this article, NTI could not be reached to clarify how directors would be compensated for their work on the board, or what the next steps for the training corporation will be, such as who will manage and staff the corporation on a day-to-day basis, and how and when the training money will be doled out.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_org_announces_name_board_members_for_training_corporation/

Aboriginal Politics

Metis leader Doucette won't run again

BETTY ANN ADAM, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

Published on: January 21, 2016 | Last Updated: January 21, 2016 5:00 PM CST



Metis Nation-Saskatchewan President Robert Doucette. GREG PENDER / SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

Robert Doucette hopes young people will step forward to lead when the Metis Nation-Saskatchewan (MNS) holds a planned election for president later this year.

“I’m not running again. I think a president should only have two terms,” Doucette said.

“This institution needs a radical makeover,” he said. The MNS closed its doors in April 2015 after losing its funding in November 2014 because of discord among the top elected leaders.

The MNS represents about 100,000 people of Metis ancestry in the province.

The new Liberal government recently agreed to pay the rent on the MNS office and fund meetings of elected leaders from across the province who make up the Provincial Metis Council so they can hold a provincewide legislative assembly, at which the date for an election is to be set. The organization expects its funding to be restored after the election.

Doucette has served as MNS president since being elected in 2007 and re-elected in 2012.

He ran for president in the 2004 election in which Duane Roth was named the winner. That election was found to be corrupt and resulted in criminal charges against 13 people, including Roth, amid allegations of ballot box stuffing and false voter lists. Eight people were convicted, one was acquitted and charges against two, including Roth, were stayed.

Court heard at one of the trials that Doucette was a victim of the corrupt 2004 election because he was likely the legitimate winner.

The organization lost its funding in 2004, when the election was called into question. Funding was restored in 2007 after Doucette won an election run by an independent third party.

During his tenure, the MNS began a massive Metis citizenship registry, which was particularly useful to hunters who wanted to exercise their constitutional right to hunt in traditional territories and students applying for scholarships designated for indigenous people.

After 30 years of working in various capacities with the organization, Doucette now works at Westmount community school as a Metis cultural youth mentor.

“I think the MNS needs new leadership to bring the organization to where it once was. I ask young Metis people to step up and take that chance. The Metis need champions that have honesty, integrity and respect,” Doucette said.

Doucette says the MNS constitution has been hampered for decades by flawed amendments that were made in the 1990s.

In 2004, consultant Marilyn Poitras recommended an overhaul of the organization’s election structure and rules, including a central membership registry and an independent electoral officer.

Doucette’s efforts to make changes failed in recent years as his political foe, Gerald Morin, a lawyer, successfully fought the changes in court.

Direct Link: <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/saskatchewan/metis-leader-doucette-wont-run-again>

Manitoba Liberals promise to tackle First Nations housing crisis if elected

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 18, 2016 1:21 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 18, 2016 1:21 PM CT



In one home on the Wasagamack First Nation in Manitoba, the washroom consists of a slop pail placed under a toilet seat. The silver bowl is used as a sink. (Karen Pauls/CBC)

The Manitoba Liberal Party is promising to invest at least \$15 million annually to begin addressing the housing crisis on northern Manitoba First Nations.

If elected in April 2016, the Liberals will begin with that amount of funding and invest more as resources become available, stated a news release issued by the party on Monday.

"We recognize this is federal jurisdiction and welcome the federal government to the table but are prepared to start without them. We cannot accept Third World conditions in Manitoba," party leader Rana Bokhari is quoted as saying.

"Who is responsible is an old and tired argument, and those who want to have it are welcome to it. Our party is a party of action, and it's well past time to address this issue."

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs says there is a shortage of more than 17,000 homes on the province's reserves, which means overcrowding is a major problem. Many homes don't have running water.

Thousands more on-reserve homes need to be replaced because of mould and other problems.

"We know the federal government will be making infrastructure announcements soon and look forward to working with them on aboriginal housing initiatives," the Liberal release states.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/first-nations-housing-manitoba-liberals-1.3408806>

Doug Cuthand: Bellegarde, AFN chiefs must be ready for change

DOUG CUTHAND, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

Published on: January 23, 2016 | Last Updated: January 23, 2016 5:13 AM CST



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde. ARLEN REDEKOP / PROVINCE

When Perry Bellegarde took over the reins of the Assembly of First Nations a little more than a year ago, things looked bleak.

The organization's funding was slashed, and then Aboriginal Affairs minister Bernard Valcourt was refusing all overtures for new funding and parity in programming. The Harper government simply didn't place any priority on First Nations issues.

Valcourt was the worst minister to hold the portfolio since the Second World War. There was no dialogue between First Nations leaders and his office, and he seemed to stand in the way of every positive initiative.

It looked as if Bellegarde might languish in obscurity as a caretaker leader until things improved. But the federal election changed everything.

The Liberals won the election, and a new sense of optimism spread across the land — particularly in Indian Country. Indigenous people came out to the polls in record numbers and played a role in creating regime change. The result was 10 indigenous members of Parliament, two of whom are in cabinet.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has stated indigenous issues will be a priority for his government. He has agreed to remove the two per cent cap on budget increases and put more money into education. Also the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal is due to rule on the issue of parity in funding for First Nations social services, which will extend to education, health and other programs.

But financial change is only part of the equation. First Nations are long overdue for legislative change. The Indian Act is an obsolete piece of colonial legislation that doesn't reflect the fact that our treaties and aboriginal rights now are a part of the Constitution. As well, a plethora of court decisions recognize our jurisdiction regarding land and resources, and our form of government.

All this change will have an impact on First Nations, and we have to be ready. Our leaders will have to rise to the occasion. This is a new kind of pressure on First Nations leaders. They must become agents of change instead of clinging to the old ways of doing business in a colonial setting.

When it comes to representing Canada's 640 chiefs, Bellegarde knows that they don't all think alike. There are treaty areas of northwestern Ontario and the prairies that share the numbered treaties; other areas have treaties of peace and friendship that never surrendered the land; still others, like most of British Columbia, have no treaties and are in negotiations.

In addition, some First Nations are strongly independent while others are economically depressed and exist as welfare states.

There is no one-size-fits-all legislation or magic wand that will satisfy everyone. What's needed is a long-term, nation-to-nation relationship that puts First Nations governments at the table as legitimate partners in Confederation.

This requires developing legislation jointly between First Nations representatives and the federal government. It will be a historic break with our colonial past, but will come with some resistance.

Despite the rhetoric, many First Nations leaders are quite comfortable with the old way of doing things. Some are content because they find it easy to be told what to do, and to follow colonial rules and fall in line. The hard work comes in breaking new ground. More than a century of colonial rule has left deep-seated fears and a lack of belief in our own capacity.

Also, while political and legislative change came to a halt during the past decade under the Tories, our people moved forward independently. Movements like Idle No More mobilized public opinion and advanced the agenda. Neither government nor First Nations leaders can go back to business as usual.

This is the landscape that Bellegarde and the national leadership are up against. On one hand, the government is committed to improve funding for First Nations; on the other, First Nations people have rising expectations.

It's up to Bellegarde and the AFN's regional chiefs to work together to eliminate old attitudes. They must direct the change that's coming our way.

Direct Link: <http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/0122-edit-cuthand-col>

Time for Kathleen Wynne to take a stand against Energy East

It's time to let go of the pipe dream and instead speed up Canada's transition to a modern, clean energy economy



Premier Kathleen Wynne should follow her B.C. counterpart's example and come out against TransCanada's Energy East pipeline and tanker proposal, writes Keith Brooks.

By: Keith Brooks Published on Sun Jan 24 2016

In the wake of British Columbia's recent announcement that it cannot support Kinder Morgan's proposed Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, conservative pundits and oil companies are turning their sights to TransCanada's Energy East pipeline and tanker proposal. But there's no reason to believe that Energy East — the last pipe plan standing — will get built.

By opposing Kinder Morgan, B.C. Premier Christy Clark has shown that her priority is protecting the best interests of the people of B.C. Ontario should learn from this.

B.C.'s opposition to the proposal was based on five conditions, ranging from spill response to First Nations consultation, to guaranteeing economic benefits for the people of B.C. Kinder Morgan failed to meet these conditions, especially when it came to putting in place a "world class" spill prevention system and emergency response plan.

Oil companies and politicians are now shifting their focus to the last mega-pipeline proposal on the table — Energy East. But its prospects look even worse than Kinder Morgan's.

On Thursday Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre, on behalf of 82 Montreal-area mayors, voiced official opposition to the proposal. After an extensive review and public consultation, Montreal municipal leaders said the potential risks outweigh any possible economic benefits to communities. The review showed that the project could have unacceptable social, economic, environmental and public security impacts.

Like B.C. Premier Clark and the Montreal mayors, Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard set out clear conditions that Energy East would need to meet in order to win the province's approval. Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne did the same thing back in 2014 — even though on Friday she ignored that Energy East fails to meet any of the reasonable conditions her own government put in place to safeguard Ontario residents. And it doesn't look as though TransCanada will be able to meet those conditions.

Among the criteria is the need for world-class contingency plans and an emergency response program. But the Ontario Energy Board, in its review of Energy East, decried that emergency response plans were either inadequate or not available. Guaranteeing the safety of Energy East is no small feat given that the pipeline would traverse the entire breadth of Ontario and much of Quebec while crossing nearly 1,000 rivers and lakes. Add to this that much of the proposed Energy East route wasn't built to carry tarsands oil but lower-pressure natural gas. An oil pipeline would never have been allowed so close to so many bodies of water.

There are serious concerns around what happens when the pipeline inevitably leaks, especially after the U.S. National Academy of Sciences released a landmark study just last month that shows pipelines carrying tarsands oil (diluted bitumen) need special spill response measures that don't yet exist.

Especially damning is the Ontario Energy Board's top-line finding: the environmental risks of Energy East outweigh the potential benefits to Ontarians. The board found that economic benefits projected for the province may have been over-estimated, and "any claims about substantial GDP growth and job creation in Ontario from pipeline construction should be viewed critically."

Another unfulfilled provincial condition: properly consult with First Nations, which the Chiefs of Ontario have already formally noted. This is a serious matter. The B.C. Supreme Court just found in favour of the Coastal First Nations challenging the Northern Gateway pipeline project on exactly this — lack of proper consultation.

There's also the public: the majority of Ontarians oppose Energy East. And for good reason, Lake Temagami, Lake Superior and the Ottawa River are no less deserving of protection than the Great Bear Rainforest.

On top of all this, the federal government has promised a new, meaningful review process for all energy projects. The National Energy Board hasn't started to review the Energy East proposal, so it should be put through this new, strengthened process.

All this suggests that Energy East's fate will be much like that of Kinder Morgan: the Ontario government must oppose the pipeline, just like the B.C. government said no to the Trans Mountain project. Based on recent history, this is the most likely outcome.

It's time to let go of the pipe dream and instead speed up Canada's transition to a modern, clean energy economy. Premier Wynne, time to make your move.

Keith Brooks is Clean Economy Director at Environmental Defence.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2016/01/24/time-for-kathleen-wynne-to-take-a-stand-against-energy-east.html>

Top aboriginal chief to Canada's Trudeau: Words are easy, take action

Mon Jan 25, 2016 6:33pm EST



1 of 1 [Full Size](#)

By Rod Nickel

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (Reuters) - Canada's top aboriginal chief wants more action from new Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to alleviate crippling poverty and poor living conditions among the country's indigenous community, saying: "Words are easy."

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, the main political group representing the country's aboriginal people, said he would put pressure on Trudeau to deliver on election promises to his community.

"It's a travesty that this quality of life persists in this great, rich country called Canada," Bellegarde said in an interview on Monday after a shooting spree in a remote aboriginal town last week.

"Everyone's focused on La Loche now, saying this is not acceptable in 2016."

A gunman shot 11 people, killing four, at a school and home in La Loche, Saskatchewan, an impoverished northern community with high rates of suicide, addiction and unemployment.

A 17-year-old youth made his first court appearance on Monday, facing four counts of first-degree murder, seven counts of attempted murder and unauthorized possession of a firearm. He remains in custody.

"Words are easy to say ... there has to be these investments now to get us to the same starting line as everyone else," Bellegarde said. "We've got 10, 12, 13 people living in a two-bedroom house. That affects everything."

Bellegarde, who voted for the first time in the October election that vaulted Trudeau to power, said he believed the new prime minister "gets it," referring to the need to improve living standards.

Less than half of Canada's aboriginal people, also known as First Nations, have typically voted in elections because many do not recognize the government's sovereignty.

But anger over disproportionately high rates of violence against indigenous women, dire living conditions as well as resource development and environmental issues, prompted Bellegarde to publicly urge aboriginal people to cast ballots last year.

PLEDGED HELP

Trudeau, the Liberal Party leader, took power last year promising to tackle high levels of poverty, crime, bad housing and poor health among aboriginal residents who make up 4 percent of the country's population of 36 million.

In December, Trudeau promised a new "nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations peoples" and an inquiry into the high rates of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

The prime minister, 44, was speaking after a report found the forcible separation of aboriginal children from their families amounted to cultural genocide.

Friday's school shooting occurred in La Loche which, with the neighboring Clearwater River Dene Indian reserve, embodies the dire prospects for Canada's aboriginal people.

"We are living in Third World Conditions," said Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Bobby Cameron. "The mold in our homes, the cold that comes through the walls ... something's going to give."

Trudeau, who plans to run deficits to stimulate Canada's struggling economy, called Bellegarde on Friday to express condolences about the shooting.

The national chief urged Trudeau to demonstrate support by increasing aboriginal spending in his first budget, expected in March or April.

Trudeau responded by saying it was a priority for him to repair Ottawa's strained relationship with aboriginal residents, Bellegarde said.

Bellegarde said he wanted more spending on health, training, preserving languages, policing and infrastructure, such as housing, water treatment and recreation centers.

Infrastructure Minister Amarjeet Sohi said on Monday he had a mandate to deal with infrastructure that is lacking in aboriginal communities, such as clean drinking water, adequate housing and proper wastewater systems.

"As part of our plan for the new money, we are going to be fulfilling the commitments we made in order to make sure that our First Nations ... have the right infrastructure that the rest of Canadians take for granted," he said, declining to say how much money the government would spend.

(Additional reporting by David Ljunggren in Ottawa; Editing by Peter Cooney)

Direct Link: <http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKCN0V32QB?sp=true>

Justin Trudeau to meet with national Inuit leaders today

'We've never had a sitting prime minister come meet us on our terms at our office,' says ITK president

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 26, 2016 4:30 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 26, 2016 4:30 AM CT



Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, shakes hands with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau after a Truth and Reconciliation Commission meeting in Ottawa in December. Obed says Tuesday's meeting between Inuit leaders and the prime minister 'shows a great sense of respect that the Canadian government is giving to Inuit.' (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami)

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will meet with representatives from national Inuit organizations today in Ottawa and Inuit leaders plan to use the face-time to lobby for funds before the federal budget.

"The meeting with the prime minister is, I believe, a great moment in time for Canadian Inuit," said Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK).

"We've never had a sitting prime minister come meet us on our terms at our office."

Obed said Inuit have struggled in the past 10 to 15 years to be recognized by the previous federal government.

"To have this happen so soon in the new government's mandate really shows a great sense of respect that the Canadian government is giving to Inuit."

Building a constructive dialogue and a meaningful working relationship with the federal government are Obed's main goals at this meeting, but he said advocating for federal funds is also top of mind.

"We're always going to fight for more money for the things that are priorities to us because we know that in a lot of different things it will take money to solve the challenges that we have," said Obed.



Cathy Towtongie, president of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., says she'll be lobbying in the meeting for Nunavut's fair share of federal infrastructure funding. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

Housing, suicide prevention, and infrastructure are a few key areas that ITK will be putting on the agenda. But Obed said for him this is also a time to build on the gains Inuit have made over the past 50 years.

"We have land claims, we have protection in the constitution, we have protection through the UN declaration on indigenous rights," said Obed.

"Incorporating all those things into how government works is going to be just as important as new money for things that are important to us."

Nunavut's fair share

"Transportation, marine development, hydro, broadband, and housing, those are the areas we have to put on priority," said Cathy Towtongie, president of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI).

Towtongie said she sees this as a chance to advocate for Nunavut's share of the infrastructure funds the Liberals said they would deliver if elected.

"We're meeting with the prime minister to ensure that Nunavut receives their fair share of the \$125 billion that was promised over the next 10 years."

Support for Nunavut's growing fishing industry is another issue that Towtongie wants to raise with Trudeau.



Duane Smith, president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, will also be meeting with the prime minister. He was elected chair of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation on Monday and will formally assume the position at a meeting next month. (David Thurton/ CBC)

"We want our fair share of the quota," said Towtongie, "That's what we've been pushing for and we hope in the future that with the new fisheries minister, Nunavut will get their fair share."

Towtongie said NTI will be advocating to ensure that Nunavut receives some of the \$600 million available through the aboriginal fishing strategy, which has not yet been accessible to Inuit.

Duane Smith, the president of Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada [who won the election for chair and CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation on Monday](#), said he will be extending an invitation to Trudeau to visit the Beaufort-Delta region again.

"I want to work closely with the federal government, as I said during the campaign, to try and stimulate the economy within this region as they have committed to," Smith said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/justin-trudeau-inuit-leaders-meeting-1.3419678>

Duane Smith elected chair of Inuvialuit Regional Corporation

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 25, 2016 2:00 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 25, 2016 8:03 PM CT



Duane Smith, president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, has been elected chair and CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. (David Thurton/ CBC)

Duane Smith has been elected chair of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, defeating four other candidates to succeed Nellie Cournoyea.

Vernon Blaine Amos finished second, with Vince Teddy, Jackie Jacobson and Richard McLeod trailing.

"It's not my land claim, it's all our beneficiaries' and I need their support to make it work as best that we can," Smith said. "I want them to have as much input as they can in regards to developing this vision as to where we go as an organization and as a people."

Smith is also currently president of Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, having been acclaimed to a fourth term in 2014.

Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada said Smith remains the president, but the ICC board "will discuss the next steps" between now and the next IRC board meeting, scheduled to take place mid-February. That's when Smith officially becomes IRC chair.

Only the 42 directors that sit on the Inuvialuit community corporations in the Beaufort-Delta region of the Northwest Territories vote in the election for IRC chair and CEO. Prior to the election, some members and candidates had lobbied to change the system so all beneficiaries of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement could vote for the chair and CEO.

Smith said the IFA clearly sets out the election system with the power resting with the community corporations, and any changes to that system would require a majority vote by the community corporation directors.

He added that the IRC would need to get legal clarification on whether beneficiaries living outside the settlement region could vote in elections.

Outgoing IRC chair and CEO Cournoyea served nine consecutive terms beginning in 1996.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/duane-smith-irc-chair-1.3418977>

Christy Clark's LNG Comments 'Paternalistic' And 'Mindless': First Nations Leaders

CP | By Dirk Meissner, The Canadian Press
Posted: 01/26/2016 11:41 am EST Updated: 01/26/2016 11:59 am EST

THE CANADIAN PRESS 🇨🇦

VANCOUVER— Premier Christy Clark had sharp words Monday for what she calls the "forces of No" in British Columbia who mount resistance efforts to government initiatives purely out of a fear of change.

First Nations leaders quickly shot back at the premier, labelling her comments "paternalistic" and "mindless."

Clark made the statements during a news conference where she fielded questions about opposition to the Trans-Pacific Trade Partnership, environmental concerns over liquefied natural gas development and tax breaks for the mining industry.

She said negotiating trade pacts and resource developments involves tough, but potentially rewarding benefits and she would rather be known as an achiever than a quitter.



Christy Clark, speaking at an event in Abbotsford, B.C. on Friday, criticized opponents of the province's LNG plans. (Photo: B.C. Gov Flickr)

"There are people who just say no to everything, and heaven knows there are plenty of those in British Columbia," said Clark. "But just because it's hard doesn't mean you give up. It doesn't mean you should be a quitter."

She criticized a coalition of First Nations, environmentalists and Opposition New Democrats who signed a declaration demanding a protection zone near a proposed multibillion-dollar LNG project at Lelu Island near Prince Rupert.

"I'm not sure what science the forces of No bring together up there except that it's not really about the science," said Clark. "It's not really about the fish. It's just about trying to say No. It's about fear of change. It's about a fear of the future."

Pacific Northwest LNG, backed by Malaysian energy giant Petronas, has proposed to build an LNG export terminal at Lelu Island.



Lelu Island is considered vital to the ecosystem of B.C.'s second-largest salmon-bearing waterway. (Photo: CP)

The proposed project is billed as the largest private-sector investment in B.C.'s history, valued at \$36 billion and estimated to create 4,500 construction jobs.

But the Lelu Island and Flora Bank region at the mouth of the Skeena River, is considered vital to the ecosystem of B.C.'s second-largest salmon-bearing waterway.

A coalition signed a declaration to protect the area at the end of a weekend summit in Prince Rupert, attended by more than 300 hereditary and elected First Nations leaders, scientists, politicians, fishermen and others.

"Once again, people from the entire length and breadth of the Skeena River and its estuaries have come together to let both levels of government and the industry know that they've made a mistake in siting this particular project," said Gerald Amos, Friends of Wild Salmon spokesman.

"She's on the wrong side of this equation."

Amos said the area surrounding Lelu Island is known for its eel grass beds that offer protection for salmon before they head to the ocean or return to the Skeena to spawn.

He said First Nations view Clark's comments about as insensitive to people who want to protect the Skeena salmon.

"She's on the wrong side of this equation," he said. "Labelling the forces of No is paternalistic. It's downright insulting."

Lax Kw'alaams hereditary Chief Yahaan said the project is a threat to a centuries-old salmon-fishing culture. He said Clark doesn't understand the ties his people have to the river and the salmon.

"They stepped in a little too quickly. They should have spoken to the chiefs first."

"Her mentality, the mindless phrases that come out of her mouth," said Yahaan. "Saying that we're the people of No. We're the indigenous people of this land. We live here. We know about the environment. She doesn't."

But Gitga'at First Nation Chief Arnold Clifton said declaring Lelu Island and Flora Bank off limits to industrial development may be premature.

Clifton and four other elected area chiefs representing the northwest's Tsimshian Nation said many First Nations are awaiting the results of two independent scientific reviews before deciding whether to support the LNG project.

He downplayed the comments of Yahaan and other hereditary chiefs, but pointed at area New Democrats who signed the declaration.



Skeena River, famous for the abundant trout and salmon, and steelhead fishing, located between Terrace and New Hazelton. (Photo: Getty Images)

"They stepped in a little too quickly," said Clifton of nearby Hartley Bay. "They should have spoken to the chiefs first."

New Democrat members of the legislature Jennifer Rice, Robin Austin and Doug Donaldson and the North Coast's federal member of Parliament Nathan Cullen signed the declaration.

Provincial New Democrat LNG critic Bruce Ralston said his party opposes the Lelu Island project because it does not meet the party's conditions of approval, including First Nations consent.

He said the NDP remains committed to supporting the LNG industry, providing it meets the Opposition's four conditions.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/26/clark-battles-b-c-s-forces-of-no-on-lng-trade-deal-says-she-s-no-quitter_n_9073454.html

Jody Wilson-Raybould explains impact of Confederation on aboriginal people and governance

by [Craig Takeuchi](#) on January 25th, 2016 at 4:46 PM



- Vancouver Granville MP and Minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould spoke at SFU Woodward's about the political history that led to the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. CRAIG TAKEUCHI

When Jody Wilson-Raybould was elected in the 2015 federal election for Vancouver Granville and sworn in as Minister of Justice of Canada on November 4, she became the first aboriginal person to hold that position.

Wilson-Raybould is of the We Wai Kai Nation and a descendant of the Musgamagw Tsawataineuk and Laich-Kwil-Tach peoples, who are part of the Kwakwaka'wakw and Kwak'wala speaking peoples.

On January 23, she participated in her first public speech in her role as Justice Minister as part of SFU's three-part series Being the Change: Women, Policy, and Making a Difference.

In her talk, Wilson-Raybould, a former crown prosecutor, treaty commissioner, and B.C. Assembly of First Nations regional chief, provided a comprehensive history and summary of what has led to the Truth and Reconciliation process.

She began by outlining the history of the relationship of aboriginal people to Confederation.

"When the fathers of Confederation came together in 1864 in Charlottetown, and then again a year later in Quebec, to lay the foundation for Canada, indigenous people were not present," she told the audience. "They were left out, this despite the early treaty making."

The exclusion, she explained, has had "far-reaching implications for Canada".

"The work of reconciliation today is, in many ways, at its core about rectifying this exclusion. After Confederation, crown policy became one of assimilation, and not partnership."

Among the ways the policy was enacted were the creation of the Indian Act, which made indigenous people a ward of the state, and the establishment of residential schools.

In 1982 when the Constitution was repatriated, she explained that Section 35 was included, which "recognizes and affirms existing aboriginal and treaty rights".

Unfortunately, there were differing views on how this section was interpreted, which led to a divide.

"Some legal advisors to the provinces played down the significance, even going as far to advise their clients that most aboriginal rights had been extinguished, including aboriginal title here in British Columbia and that any continuing aboriginal rights were limited."

While some called the section "an empty box that could only be populated at the will of the Crown", on the other hand, "for indigenous leaders who had fought so vigorously for the Charter amendments, it was anything *but* an empty box".

The difference in understanding of aboriginal self-government after repatriation became a source of confusion and disagreement during negotiations.

Consequently, the issue became one of "a question of power and who exercises it".

"Since the failure of the Constitutional conferences in the '80s, indigenous peoples have been accumulating power: economic, legal, and political power, to negotiate as equals in order to reach, as René Lévesque said, a civilized solution," she said. "Today, after numerous challenges, the courts have confirmed that indigenous people do have an inherent right of self-government and that the powers survived Confederation."

A Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Chilcotin, B.C.*, in June 2014 proved to be what many observers, including Wilson-Raybould, called a "game changer".

In the landmark case *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*, she explained, "the court, in granting the first declaration of aboriginal title, found that aboriginal title is territorial in nature and not simply in small spots".

While it was the first decision of its kind, what was also important about the case for Wilson-Raybould was how it advanced to "the next big question that needs to be answered, namely whose laws apply to the title lands so proven and how will they be governed?"

The answer, she said, is multi-level governance, a combination of indigenous, provincial, and federal law.

She said this combination will decrease legal gaps, promote greater cooperation and compromise, and allow for creative shifts in the role of law when making social progress and innovative policies.

"I became involved in First Nations politics and ran for regional chief because I believe that by building on success, we could do more to accelerate the transition of indigenous communities from a colonial to a post-colonial world to finish the unfinished business of Confederation."

You can follow Craig Takeuchi on Twitter at twitter.com/cinecraig.

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/news/623701/jody-wilson-raybould-explains-impact-confederation-aboriginal-people-and-governance>

Inuit leaders “encouraged” by meeting with PM

“We will continue to push for action on the priorities that we outlined at today’s meeting”

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, January 27, 2016 - 1:05 pm



ITK president Natan Obed, left, hosted Prime Minister Trudeau at a sit-down meeting at ITK's Ottawa office Jan. 27. (PHOTO BY PATRICIA D'SOUZA/ITK)



Makivik Corp. president Jobie Tukkiapik, left, has a word with Prime Minister Trudeau following a meeting with Inuit leaders Jan. 27. Makivik said it used the sit-down meeting to highlight Nunavik's pressing needs for housing and updated telecommunications infrastructure. (PHOTO COURTESY OF MAKIVIK CORP)

Inuit leaders say they've taken an important first step in renewing their relationship with the federal government — a relationship that leaders hope will work to address Inuit-specific issues.

Canada's national Inuit organization, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, hosted a sit-down meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Jan. 27 at its Ottawa office, a first for ITK.

The afternoon meeting included leaders from each of the four regions of the Inuit Nunangat regions, including youth and women's group representatives, who shared their goals with federal ministers on issues ranging from education to food security, health care, housing and increased Inuit engagement in Arctic politics.

"Food and shelter are basic necessities of life, and are foundational to the development of our communities," said ITK President Natan Obed in a Jan. 27 release.

"We agree with the government that there needs to be a cognitive shift which acknowledges the importance of investing in — not just spending on — these needs."

Alongside Obed, leaders of Inuit birthright organizations, including Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and Nunavik's Makivik Corp., pressed the importance of Inuit land claims as vital to that renewed relationship between Inuit and Ottawa.

The full implementation of those land claims in Canada's Inuit regions would help address many of the social and economic challenges Inuit face, leaders told Trudeau and other federal ministers who joined the Jan. 27 meeting.

But Inuit leaders said they left the event feeling as though their needs were heard.

"We are encouraged by the engagement of the Prime Minister and his cabinet colleagues with Inuit, and the respectful tone they have taken," Obed said.

"We will continue to push for action on the priorities that we outlined at today's meeting."

In a Jan. 27 release from the Prime Minister's office, Trudeau characterized his government's relationship with Inuit as one based on "respect, rights, cooperation and partnership."

"I am eager to bring about positive change in the lives of Inuit across Canada and work together to unleash the North's amazing potential," he said.

The meeting this week included NTI President Cathy Towtongie, Makivik President Jobie Tukkiapik, Nunatsiavut President Sarah Leo, outgoing and newly-elected chairs of the Inuvialuit Regional Corp., Nellie Cournoyea and Duane Smith, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada president Rebecca Kudloo and National Inuit Youth Council president Maatalii Okalik.

Joining Trudeau were Indigenous and Northern Affairs minister Carolyn Bennett, Fisheries and Oceans minister and Nunavut MP Hunter Tootoo, along with Yukon MP Larry Bagnell and Northwest Territories MP Michael McLeod.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_leaders_encouraged_by_meeting_with_pm/

First Nations child welfare ruling a precedent for other on-reserve issues, lawyers say

Government services that Canadians take for granted, 'First Nations people do not'

By Nicole Ireland, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 27, 2016 1:53 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 27, 2016 3:19 PM ET



Aboriginal lawyers say Tuesday's human rights ruling that children living on reserves have been discriminated against sets an important precedent for complaints about underfunding in areas including education. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

Aboriginal lawyers are cautiously optimistic Tuesday's human rights ruling that Canada fails to provide equal services for children on reserves will legally oblige the government to fix other inequities facing First Nations, including education, housing, access to clean water and health care.

"It paves the way," Katherine Hensel, founder of a Toronto-based law firm serving aboriginal clients, told CBC News. "Discrimination infuses the entire relationship between the federal government and First Nations across the board in terms of government services."



Lawyer Katherine Hensel hopes that the ruling will prompt the federal government to provide equitable funding for on-reserve services before other human rights complaints are filed. (Hensel Barristers)

In fact, there are a number of First Nations complaints already in line for consideration by the Canadian Human Rights Commission that will likely be affected, said Naiomi Metallic, a Halifax lawyer specializing in aboriginal law and constitutional rights.

"You could make a complaint in this regard to every essential service on-reserve," Metallic said, noting federal auditor-general reports have repeatedly flagged disparities in funding for aboriginal people compared to what other Canadians get.

Access to special education for on-reserve children and equal policing in First Nations communities are two of the complaints before the commission, she said.



The discrimination ruling could apply to 'every essential service on-reserve,' says lawyer Naiomi Metallic. (Burchells LLP)

The tribunal decision, that failing to provide equal funding and resources for child welfare amounts to discrimination, sets "a really excellent precedent for all of these other cases or arguments in the queue about ... all of these services that are substantially underfunded," Metallic said.

Hensel hopes the ruling goes beyond establishing a precedent and prompts the government to address the broader issue of underfunding for First Nations services, making further human rights complaints unnecessary.

"There's child welfare, there's health, there's education, there's water, there's infrastructure, housing," she said. "Every single element of government services that Canadians take for granted, First Nations people do not.

"These are, for the most part across the country, treaty people who gave up a tremendous amount based on assurances that they would have access to what the rest of Canada had access to, and they simply haven't," she added.

'Adult conversation' about funding

Jean Teillet, an aboriginal rights lawyer reached in Vancouver, said Tuesday's ruling criticized Canada's treatment of First Nations people "as if they are not an investment in our future," emphasizing the "minimal amount [of resources] we can get away with."



Lawyer Jean Teillet says Tuesday's ruling calls out Canadians for providing the 'minimal amount we can get away with' for services on First Nations. (Pape Salter Teillet Barristers and Solicitors)

Although human rights cases don't cite precedent the same way courts do, Teillet said, the "damning evidence" in the judgment will have a significant effect on other human rights complaints involving services on First Nations.

"[It] will be very hard for them to turn around and make some kind of contrary finding," she said.

Despite the legal victory, the lawyers said, the federal government faces an enormous task when it comes to taking action.

The next step has to be a "sea change" in its relationship with aboriginal people, Hensel said.

"The newly elected Liberal government has said a lot of very fine words about their perception and their intentions in this regard," she said. "And now it's time for implementation."

Despite her hope that further human rights complaints won't be necessary, if that implementation doesn't happen quickly, "They're coming," Hensel said.

Metallic said she recognizes the necessary changes carry a big financial cost.

"There's going to have to be an adult conversation about funding things appropriately," she said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/first-nations-ruling-sets-precedent-1.3421889>

'It showed a true sense of respect;' Trudeau meets with Inuit leaders 'We talked about ways in which to work together'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 27, 2016 8:01 PM NT Last Updated: Jan 27, 2016 8:01 PM NT



ITK President Natan Obed and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau chat at Tuesday's meeting in Ottawa.
(ITK/Submitted Photo)

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met with Inuit leaders at their offices in Ottawa Tuesday to discuss issues facing northern indigenous communities.

"The symbolism of it, [that] the Canadian prime minister would work with Inuit and come to the offices where we work was something that was very meaningful," said Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Natan Obed.

Obed said getting to set the agenda and hold the meeting on his terms with Trudeau showed the value the prime minister holds for Inuit.

"It showed a true sense of respect on a working level for the way in which Inuit are going to work with the prime minister and the Government of Canada moving forward," he said.

"So, it moves beyond the symbolism of saying we're important, it actually accepts the fact that Inuit have a rightful role to stand with the Canadian government and talk with the Canadian government as equal."



Natan Obed and other Inuit representatives met with Prime Minister Trudeau at the ITK offices in Ottawa Tuesday. (ITK/Submitted Photo)

Obed, Trudeau and other Inuit representatives met for about an hour to discuss solutions to issues facing Inuit. Obed said issues like implementing land claims, improved health of Inuit, and economic development and infrastructure development were at the forefront of the discussion.

"We talked about things like suicide and tuberculosis, the overarching social determinants of health. We talked about needing more infrastructure, needing support for growing Inuit Nunangat. We talked about ways in which to work together," he said.

Obed said MP Yvonne Jones and representatives from Nunatsiavut, including President Sarah Leo, were part of the meeting and the group encouraged Trudeau's work on the inquiry in to missing and murdered aboriginal women and implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

He said representatives at the meeting built their speaking notes together to represent issues in all Inuit regions and all 53 Inuit communities in Canada

"I find when Inuit leaders get together to talk about the issues, whether it's in the west in Tuktoyaktuk or in the east in Nain, the issues are very similar and the way in which we want to approach dealing with them is very similar," Obed said.

Obed said it was exciting to be part of such a meaningful a meeting with the prime minister to find effective solutions to Inuit issues.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/trudeau-meets-with-inuit-1.3422163>

NDP takes aim at new Clerk Michael Wernick over aboriginal role

KATHRYN MAY, OTTAWA CITIZEN
[More from Kathryn May, Ottawa Citizen](#)

Published on: January 27, 2016 | Last Updated: January 27, 2016 7:19 PM EST



NDP MP Charlie Angus. ADRIAN WYLD / THE CANADIAN PRESS

The NDP took a swipe at the Liberals Wednesday for making Michael Wernick their top bureaucratic adviser, because he served as deputy minister of Aboriginal Affairs when the previous government was resisting a human rights case aimed at ending discrimination against First Nation children on reserves.

NDP MP Charlie Angus, critic for Indigenous and Northern Affairs, told the House of Commons on Wednesday that long-standing discrimination against First Nations children was part of a “pattern of systemic discrimination” within the culture of various federal departments.

He then singled out Wernick, saying the new Clerk of the Privy Council was “lambasted by a parliamentary committee for dragging his feet on the child welfare crisis.” He also said that Cindy Blackstock, who filed the initial complaint with the

Canadian Human Rights Commission, had cited Wernick as a key antagonist in her fight with the government.

Blackstock won her legal battle on behalf of First Nations children earlier this week.

“For reconciliation to be real, action must be louder than words,” said the NDP MP. “What kind of message is the prime minister sending to indigenous families by appointing Mr. Wernick to oversee the entire civil service?”

But senior bureaucrats say Angus was out of line in his attack, because it was completely at odds with Canada’s convention of ministerial responsibility, which makes ministers, not bureaucrats, responsible for the actions of their departments.

Wernick served as the deputy minister at Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development during most of the Conservatives’ decade in power. Wernick’s job was to implement their policies, not decide them.

Liberal Carolyn Bennett, minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, drove that point home in her reply to Angus, saying that Wernick, as the new clerk, will now lead the “loyal implementation” of the Liberals’ policies. The Liberal government has vowed to respect the human rights ruling and end the discrimination.

“(Angus) must understand that the public service in this country’s primary goal is loyal implementation,” she said.

“There is a new government here and the Clerk of the Privy Council is empowered to deliver the work that we have promised in the past election, and he will do it.”

By convention, Canada’s public servants are also supposed to be invisible and anonymous non-partisans. Still, it was the NDP’s second shot in days at the Liberals over Wernick’s appointment. Earlier this week, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair demanded Trudeau ask Wernick to apologize for comments he made last year likening a student protest to the actions of “brownshirts and Maoists.”

Donald Savoie, a University of Moncton expert who has written extensively on the “bargain” between public servants and politicians, said Angus took a “cheap shot” and as experienced MP he should understand the “discipline of power.

“Does he really think that Wernick had the power to set the government policy, direct the pace of change, the basic government approach to aboriginal affairs and level of funding allocated to his department? Of course not, and he should know that having served in Parliament for a long period.”

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/ndp-takes-aim-at-new-clerk-michael-wernick-over-aboriginal-role>

First Nations leaders meet Finance Minister Bill Morneau, talk budget issues

Pressure mounts on federal government to put promises into action in its first budget

By Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press Posted: Jan 28, 2016 12:20 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 28, 2016 5:54 PM ET



Key leaders from the Assembly of First Nations are to meet Finance Minister Bill Morneau today. (Chris Wattie/Reuters)

Top leaders from the Assembly of First Nations met Finance Minister Bill Morneau on Thursday for a pre-budget talk which both sides described as productive.

The indigenous leaders laid out their main concerns and needs and said they could benefit from some of the infrastructure money the government has been promising.

The discussion came as the government tries to work out how to make good on a number of ambitious and uncosted campaign promises, such as lifting a two-per-cent cap on funding for reserve programs and services.

It followed a landmark ruling this week from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which rebuked the federal government for systemic underfunding of First Nations child welfare services.

The two sides were cautiously optimistic about their prospects after the talks.



Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day is one of the leaders meeting with Finance Minister Bill Morneau this afternoon. (CBC)

"Our government respects and values input of the AFN and Canada's indigenous communities as we work towards the next budget," Morneau said in a statement.

Isadore Day, the Ontario regional chief for the AFN, said the face-to-face session was a good first step, but he stressed the need for action.

"This needs to become a national dialogue," he said.

"You've got a portion of Canadian society which are your treaty partners, First Nations people, off to the side and suffering in silence. And our people are dying every day."

As it looks ahead at the budget, the government should consider putting infrastructure dollars — a key plank of the Liberal election platform — into First Nations communities, Day added.

"Our chiefs are saying 'we don't want to be left out of that process'," he said.

"This cannot happen without our involvement, our benefit and us being partners at the table with respect to infrastructure development and improvements in the North."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has cited the need to reform the relationship with Aboriginal Peoples as a top priority — a sentiment reflected in mandate letters sent to each cabinet minister.

But his government faces a financial crunch, especially with oil prices sliding.

Morneau flagged the fiscal challenges during Thursday's meeting, Day said.

"The truth was placed on the table about the condition of the dollar and the Canadian economy," he said.

"He was more interested and inclined to want to listen to what First Nations were bringing forward in terms of priorities, issues, concerns and the things that are really creating havoc in our communities with respect to the fiscal aspect of our operations."

Earlier this month, Morneau said helping aboriginals will be a "high priority" in the upcoming budget.

One of his central challenges will be to find a way to pay for pledges that have not been fully priced out, such as ending all boil-water advisories on First Nations reserves within five years and delivering on all 94 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/cp-first-nations-leaders-finance-minister-1.3423724>

Aboriginal Sports

Olympic medallist expands cross country skiing program in aboriginal schools

Scott says huge benefits in physical literacy and mental wellness could lead to future Olympic medals

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 21, 2016 8:13 PM MT Last Updated: Jan 21, 2016 8:13 PM MT



Beckie Scott brings Ski Fit North Alberta program to Tsuut'ina First Nation High School 1:55

The principal of an Alberta First Nation school is singing the praises of a cross country skiing program expanded this week by retired Olympian Beckie Scott.



Tsuut'ina First Nation High School were given to a chance to cross country ski, some for the first time. (Evelyne Asselin/CBC)

"We want them to become the best learners they can and part of that is being physically active," said Jeff Horvath, principal at Tsuut'ina First Nation High School.

"We want healthy young people in our communities and cross country skiing being one of the best exercises you can do, I think it will only benefit our young people."



Jeff Horvath, Tsuut'ina First Nation High School principal, says the program will benefit young people. (Evelyne Asselin/CBC)

This week two-time Olympic cross country ski medallist Beckie Scott brought the [Ski Fit North Alberta](#) program to the school, the 18th one to sign up for the program.

Ski Fit North Alberta brings cross country skiing equipment to aboriginal schools across the province. The program was developed by Cross Country Canada and Cross Country Alberta and receives corporate sponsorship.

Scott says the list of benefits is lengthy.



Two-time Olympic cross country ski medalist Beckie Scott says Ski Fit North Alberta program is great for physical literacy and mental wellness. (CBC)

"We know there is so much in the way of health benefits in terms of physical literacy and mental wellness when you engage kids in sport," she said.

"And cross country skiing is one of the best sports there is."

A Grade 5 student is enjoying skiing for the first time.



Grade 5 student Raven Crane skied for the first time this week. She said it's fun. (CBC)

"It was good but I fell a lot, but I just got back up," Raven Crane said.

"It's fun."

That's music to the ears of Scott.

"Most importantly though, we just want the kids to have fun and enjoy sport in a really supportive environment," Scott said.



Ski Fit North Alberta has been brought to 18 schools across the province. (Evelyne Asselin/CBC)

Meanwhile, Horvath is hoping some of those smiles could lead to a podium visit.

"The smiles we have had over the last couple of days have been fantastic and we got some keen students," the principal said.

"We are going to develop some trails and get these guys on an Olympic team in a few years."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/olympic-medalist-expands-cross-country-skiing-in-aboriginal-schools-1.3414725>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Local Knowledge as a Model of Climate Change Mitigation

01/21/2016 01:03 pm ET | Updated 3 days ago

[Nichlas Emmons](#) Writer, Reader, Gamer, Pug-Lover, Scientist, Nerd

The Inuit Circumpolar Council - Alaska (ICC-AK) recently released a report that strongly tied the protection of traditional aspects of culture to the protection of the natural environment. In its latest study on food security, the report indicates that environmental conservation and protection may successfully be done through the adherence to indigenous knowledge. This may very well be an interesting conclusion because it offers yet another suggestion to address our mounting ecological crises; especially one problem Arctic peoples are beginning to understand all too well: climate change.

Indigenous knowledge systems are ways of interacting with the local environment that is uniquely fitted to a specific culture or community. These knowledge systems emphasize local understandings that maintain and protect ways of living. Understanding and engaging in these local knowledge may be an important aspect of sustainability, which is a way of behaving indefinitely. To do this, community members develop ways of

thinking and existing that protect the natural environment because it also means protecting oneself. For the Inuit, and other members of Native communities across the world, ecological systems include humans intricately. This stands in contrast to the Euro-centric placement of humans in the environment since the Industrial Revolution.

With regards to this particular study, the report highlights the importance of food security. This is something a very important issue, for all communities and for a variety of reasons, but it should be noted that the most extreme climates also are among the most sensitive. This certainly is the case in the Arctic where the effects of climate change are more rapidly changing the natural environment than anywhere else in the world. And, while Indigenous peoples are among the most resilient in the world, a quickly changing environment creates challenges to cultural - or human - protection and survival. One way Inuit communities appear to be dealing with assaults on their culture are increasing cultural education programs that centralize local knowledge.

This is a positive movement for Inuit communities because larger state and federal policies in the United States do little or nothing to protect Indigenous peoples or their livelihoods. This may even serve as an example to our state and federal governments as yet another way to cope with a changing climate. Mitigating human-induced climate change necessitates a diverse portfolio of options addressing many areas of impact. If we place a greater emphasis on local decision-making, then we may be better able to give attention to the areas that lack sufficiency. It also would be helpful to have implemented a more supportive framework from our state and federal governments. When it comes to environmental policy, everyone is affected.

How may local knowledge be used in your community to be used to protect your environment?

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nichlas-emmons/local-knowledge-as-a-mode_b_8890654.html

Fractured Land: Powerful doc pits First Nations' concerns against B.C. LNG

MARSHA LEDERMAN

The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Jan. 22, 2016 12:00AM EST

Last updated Friday, Jan. 22, 2016 12:00AM EST

Directed by Fiona Rayher, Damien Gillis

Classification PG

Genre documentary

Country USA

Language English

In British Columbia, where the government's love affair with liquefied natural gas and First Nations' concerns about the environment seem bound to come to a head, young lawyer Caleb Behn promises to be a force in this fracture.

From B.C.'s northeast, Behn fishes and hunts, but is as comfortable behind a laptop as he is on the land. Bright, articulate and charismatic, Behn supports protests, but goes to law school with the intention of fighting Big Oil and Gas in a different arena: the courts.

The documentary *Fractured Land* chronicles his struggle, and the film is powerful; a skillful study in landscape as well as character.

The conflict unfolds visually – an industrial invasion of the pristine land: flames shooting out of flare stacks, endless piles of logged trees, enormous white oil tanks rising from the snow. In one heartbreaking scene, Behn assists after a pipeline maintenance crew finds a moose and her calf trapped in a sinkhole.

Meanwhile, the B.C. minister in charge of the file declares “we’re going to change the landscape of British Columbia forever.”

Not if Behn can help it.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/film-reviews/fractured-land-powerful-doc-pits-first-nations-concerns-against-bc-lng/article28319884/>

Canada Extends Olive Branch to First Nations Amid Escalating Pipeline Tensions

By Hilary Beaumont

January 22, 2016 | 4:10 pm

As a tense court case resumed Friday morning, the Trudeau government extended an olive branch to a First Nation that accused the federal government of failing to consult them on Kinder Morgan's controversial Trans Mountain pipeline.

The Tsleil-Waututh First Nation also argued in court that the National Energy Board (NEB) erred when it failed to adequately assess the impact of increased tanker traffic, which the nation argues will inevitably lead to a devastating oil spill.

The court case resumed the same week NEB hearings for the pipeline marched forward, amid protests. In the packed court that overflowed into a second room, the Attorney General of Canada asked to pause the court case for three months to consult with Tsleil-Waututh on a nation-to-nation basis — a major campaign promise by the Liberals during the election. Vancouver's Federal Court of Appeal granted the motion in part, giving the government a chance to revamp its strategy.

"For Tsleil-Waututh, this is something that we welcome — the opportunity to engage on a nation to nation basis with the new government."

"For Tsleil-Waututh, this is something that we welcome — the opportunity to engage on a nation to nation basis with the new government to have a conversation about what this process should look like, but more specifically what this project will be," the First Nation's lawyer Eugene Kung told VICE News during a break.

Pipeline politics have reached a boiling point in Canada, and any move by the new government could tip the scales. The Liberals inherited the previous Conservative government's position of pipeline cheerleader — a stance that has led [a long list](#) of First Nations, including Tsleil-Waututh, to mount court challenges against the government's pipeline review arm, the NEB. Meanwhile, activists aren't waiting for court decisions; instead they're sabotaging vital infrastructure.

Friday's court case comes days after an activist who claimed to be from Tsleil-Waututh boarded a drilling barge operated by a Kinder Morgan contractor. The RCMP arrested the protesters, and the First Nation hastily [distanced itself](#) from the activists.

The barge borders weren't alone in their actions. Since December, at least three separate groups of activists turned off the valves of Enbridge's Line 9 and Line 7 pipelines that run through Quebec and Ontario. Three protesters were arrested and [charged with mischief](#) after they tampered with a Line 9 valve on December 22.

Line 9 was also the target of a court appeal last year by Chippewa of the Thames First Nation, which argued the NEB and the Crown had failed in their duty to consult them. The First Nation lost its appeal, but has applied for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Another First Nation has vowed to do whatever it takes to stop oil exploration in Canada's north. Clyde River in Nunavut [lost their appeal](#) to the NEB after they argued it had failed to properly consult them about seismic testing in the far north. Clyde River Mayor Jerry Natanine told VICE News in November the First Nation would do whatever it takes to stop the seismic testing, which involves loud blasts that could negatively impact marine animals and dramatically alter the community's way of life.

Tsleil-Waututh has made similar arguments about what the \$5.4 billion Trans Mountain expansion could do to the Burrard Inlet, where the pipeline would terminate. The First Nation commissioned a study [that found](#) a worst-case oil spill in the inlet could kill up to 500,000 birds and make as many as one million people sick.

Rueben George, manager of the nation's Sacred Trust, told VICE News Friday that the First Nation "will do whatever it takes" to stop the project, which would see nearly three times as

much oil — specifically, viscous and tough to clean up bitumen — pumped from near Edmonton, Alberta to Burnaby, BC.

Like Clyde River and Chippewa of the Thames before them, if Tsleil-Waututh loses the court case, George vowed they would try to take it up to the Supreme Court of Canada.

As the First Nation's case returned to court, questions about the government's review of Trans Mountain remained unanswered. Minister for Natural Resources Jim Carr issued a statement this week saying the new government has "committed to transition plans for important natural resource projects" including Trans Mountain.

Citing an unnamed government source, [Bloomberg reported](#) the Liberals want to overhaul the NEB process as per their election promises, but would have to pass a new law to do so.

Further clarity on the transition plans will be announced in coming weeks, Carr promised.

Direct Link: <https://news.vice.com/article/canada-extends-olive-branch-to-first-nations-amid-escalating-pipeline-tensions>

First Nations sign resource-development framework deal with Yukon

by THE CANADIAN PRESS

Posted Jan 25, 2016 4:30 am PST

Last Updated Jan 25, 2016 at 5:20 am PST

WHITEHORSE – One year after signalling its intention to tighten up requirements for resource development in its territory, a First Nations group in Canada's North has signed a land-management plan with Yukon Territory.

Kaska Dena, whose several nations span the border between northern British Columbia and Yukon, have inked a framework deal with the territorial government.

The agreement lays out the sharing of responsibilities, benefits and decision-making powers for resource development on traditional lands in Yukon's southeast.

Liard Chief Daniel Morris says the Kaska territory is one of the richest in Yukon and that First Nations want to benefit meaningfully from development that takes place on their territory.

Morris says the agreement is good news for industry because it provides certainty around resource extraction.

Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski says the deal is a milestone towards reconciliation and a renewed relationship between the territory and Kaska.

Direct Link: <http://www.news1130.com/2016/01/25/first-nations-sign-resource-development-framework-deal-with-yukon/>

Nunavut Inuit join Chippewas in bid for joint hearing at Supreme Court

Clyde River seismic opponents and Chippewas cite problems with NEB

LISA GREGOIRE, January 26, 2016 - 7:00 am



Toronto supporters of Clyde River residents, opposed to offshore seismic testing near their community, sign a banner outside the Federal Court of Appeal last year. The lawyer for those Clyde River residents now wants the Supreme Court of Canada to hear his case, and that of an Ontario First Nation, jointly, because they make similar arguments against the National Energy Board's natural resource development approval process. (FILE PHOTO)

Lawyers representing two high profile Canadian cases of Aboriginal peoples fighting industrial development in their midst hope there's strength in numbers.

Nader Hasan, lawyer for the Clyde River group which has opposed seismic testing off the Baffin Island coast, is asking the Supreme Court of Canada to hear his clients' appeal from a lower court.

And the Chippewas of the Thames River First Nation near London, Ont., are hoping the Supreme Court hears their case against Enbridge Pipelines which wants to modify a pipeline through their traditional territory to allow a larger volume of crude oil to flow across their land.

Both cases are coming before the Supreme Court at the same time, and with similar arguments.

Although the court has not decided yet whether to hear either of them, lawyers have asked that they be considered together.

“Both involve judicial reviews of decisions of the National Energy Board and both involve questions about the role of an administrative tribunal in discharging the Crown’s duty to consult Aboriginal peoples,” says a letter from Hasan filed Jan. 19 with the Supreme Court.

“Considering these two cases alongside each other would give the Court a breadth of factual contexts to consider these re-occurring legal issues of national importance.”

When contacted Jan. 22, Hasan declined to comment publicly on the letter saying that would be inappropriate at this time.

The Clyde River seismic opponents — former mayor Jerry Natanine, the Hamlet of Clyde River and the community’s hunters and trappers organization — are arguing, among other things, that they were not properly consulted prior to the NEB approving a five-year petroleum seismic testing program in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait.

The Chippewas are raising the NEB’s consultation role as well.

“Can the Crown evade its constitutional duty by divesting itself of decision-making authority to approve projects that clearly have the potential to adversely affect the rights of Aboriginal Peoples?” says the Chippewas’ leave application to the Supreme Court, filed Dec. 18, 2015.

“Is this consistent with the honour of the Crown and the high purpose of section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, to advance reconciliation?”

If that sounds familiar, it may be because Hasan is arguing the same point in his leave to appeal in the Clyde River case.

In fact, Hasan predicted other cases questioning the legality and legitimacy of the NEB process would likely come forward when he wrote his leave to appeal to the Supreme Court in October 2015.

“Leave should be granted because their current plight is bound to be repeated in similar contexts across Canada until this Court answers certain key legal and constitutional questions of broad public importance,” Hasan wrote.

“As tribunals are increasingly tasked with deciding issues of law affecting Aboriginal rights, the interplay between the duty to consult and the duty of procedural fairness has become an important one.”

Maxime Faille, head of the Aboriginal law group for law firm Gowlings, agreed this issue will keep arising in the courts unless the federal government clarifies the NEB’s roles and responsibilities regarding Aboriginal consultation and accommodation or unless the Supreme Court forces Ottawa’s hand.

“It’s fair to say right now, in light of developments in case law around the duty to consult, that the role of the NEB in that regard really does need to be clarified and these cases present that opportunity to provide some guidance,” Faille said.

The NEB is overseen by nine people appointed by the Governor General on advice from the federal Cabinet. According to their online biographies, five current NEB members have connections to energy and mining companies.

The NEB's main role is to regulate pipelines, power lines and the import of natural gas, petroleum products and electricity.

Section 35 of the Constitution Act mandates that Ottawa must consult with Aboriginal peoples when development has the potential to impact their traditional livelihood.

But it's unclear whether the NEB, an appointed body, has the legal authority to do that consultation or, as in the Clyde River experience, to allow the seismic companies to do it for them. And who rules on the quality and parameters of that consultation?

As projects start to creep into Aboriginal territory, especially areas where treaties and land claims exist, the regulatory process has come under fire as inadequate.

The court would perform a great service to Aboriginal peoples, government policy-makers and also development proponents by clarifying who is responsible to do what when development is proposed in traditional Aboriginal territories, said Faille, who represented the Chippewas of the Thames River First Nation at the NEB stage.

It's to the court's advantage to hear both cases simultaneously because it adds extra context and legal detail which can help the Supreme Court justices consider their decision, Faille said.

And it helps the Chippewas and Inuit of Clyde River, Faille added, because it proves to the court the breadth of the NEB's impact on Aboriginal rights, the urgency for legal clarity and the broad public policy issues at stake.

"Their main role," said Faille, of the Supreme Court, "is to set out broad principles of law and to provide guidance on the law and certain issues of national importance or certain areas of the law that require clarification or guidance."

It's been just over three months since Hasan sought leave to appeal for his Clyde River clients. In general, it usually takes the Supreme Court three to six months to consider such a request.

Proponents of seismic testing off Baffin Island, who cancelled their proposed start date in summer 2015 due to legal uncertainty, are hoping to begin their five-year project this summer, during the ice-free season.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_inuit_join_chippewas_in_bid_for_joint_hearing_at_supreme_court/

Halalt First Nation's lawsuit calls for Catalyst Paper's closure

The First Nation wants the paper mill to cease its operations on Vancouver Island

The Canadian Press Posted: Jan 25, 2016 4:51 PM PT Last Updated: Jan 25, 2016 8:42 PM PT



Catalyst Paper operates a mill in Crofton, B.C., on Vancouver Island. (CBC)

The [Halalt First Nation](#) and its business partners are suing [Catalyst Paper](#), alleging that a 59-year-old mill is trespassing and that the company has disclosed sensitive information, despite signing a confidentiality agreement.

The paper and pulp company, based in Richmond, B.C., says it denies the allegations contained in two separate civil suits and plans to defend itself vigorously.

Among other things, it says the trespassing suit is seeking \$2 billion and a permanent order to prevent Catalyst from conducting operations at the Crofton Mill on the southeast coast of Vancouver Island, near Duncan, B.C.

Catalyst says the Halalt First Nation claims the Crofton mill — operating since 1957 — interferes with its water and land rights and has caused damage to fisheries and land within the Halalt's territory.

A second suit filed by the Halalt, Sunvault Energy Inc. and Aboriginal Power Corp. seeks \$100 million from Catalyst and an order from court to permanently stop Catalyst from building, owning or operating an anaerobic digester facility.

Environmental, cultural damages highlighted

In an interview with *All Points West* host Robyn Burns, Halalt First Nation's director of operations, Eli Enns, highlighted alleged environmental and cultural damage from the mill.

He also said the \$2.1 billion sum they are seeking is justified when the totality of effects on the land and the health of Halalt First Nation are considered.

"They've been fairly dramatic over the 60 years of operation. We've seen a huge decline in biological diversity in the system and water quality," Enns said.

"Probably as importantly, the mill was constructed in and around and on sacred burial sites of the Coast Salish peoples of Halalt."

Enns also said the mill's location has damaged the Halalt First Nation economically by damaging sea resources in the area.

"I don't think you can put a dollar amount on the emotional damage to the community, but you can start to put a dollar amount on the cost of cleaning up the mess, the impact that it's had on the local community members' ability to meet their needs," he said.

Enns says his community acted in good faith in attempting to work with Catalyst to address their concerns, but the attempts did not work out.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/halalt-first-nation-catalyst-paper-1.3419470>

Waswanipi Cree demand virgin forest, caribou be protected from logging

'Our people ... are able to see there's something that's bringing a disturbance upon the wildlife,' says chief

By Jaela Bernstien, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 26, 2016 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 26, 2016 5:00 AM ET



Most of Canada's woodland caribou populations are in decline. (Wikimedia Commons)

The Cree First Nation of Waswanipi, Que. is fighting to protect one of Quebec's last remaining virgin boreal forests from forestry development.

Located about 730 kilometres north of Montreal, the community of Waswanipi describes itself as the "gateway to northern Quebec."

The Waswanipi Cree territory covers an area slightly smaller than Switzerland, and Chief Marcel Happyjack says 90 per cent of that territory has already been harvested or carved up by logging.

'We just want something that will ensure the protection of the Cree rights ... and also to protect the species that are within that area,' - Waswanipi Chief

Marcel Happyjack

Now the community is taking a stand to protect the remaining 10 per cent — or about 4,000 square kilometres — of virgin boreal forest called the Broadback Valley forest.

The swath of land is in the heart of the Waswanipi Cree First Nation territory, and it's one of the last remaining intact boreal forests in Quebec.

It's an area which the community says is central to the Cree way of life.

Plans for forestry development in the region call for building 126 kilometres of roads through the territory, which would encroach on a section of the Broadback River Valley forest.

"If they do go ahead, we would see over 113,000 hectares of land gone within two years," Happyjack said.

"That would bring total devastation to the trappers' way of life, which is hunting, fishing and trapping."



The Broadback Valley Forest, central to the Cree way of life, is one of Quebec's last virgin boreal forests. (Greenpeace)

Caribou population at risk

"We're not anti-development," Happyjack said. "We're not anti-forestry, but we just want something that will ensure the protection of the Cree rights ... and also to protect the species that are within that area."

Since 2002, the local community has been asking the province of Quebec to protect that land — home to bears, moose, migratory birds and [woodland caribou — classified as a threatened species](#) by the Canadian government.

The roads would not go through the area in question, but they would come close.

Happyjack said if the firm that wants to construct the roads, Matériaux Blanchet Inc., does get the green light, he has no doubt there will be an impact on the caribou.



Khalie Reign Sanipass, a resident of Waswanipi, holds up a model forest she brought with her to the COMEX hearing. (Submitted by Allan Saganash)

"That caribou [population] is decreasing. We know that there's a lot of disturbance because of forestry and because of roads being built, and this species seems to be moving farther away from the territory," said Happyjack.

"Our people — our trappers and our tallymen — are able to see that there's something that's bringing a disturbance upon the wildlife there," he said.

Tallymen are the stewards of the land, authorized by the Cree community to supervise harvesting activities on a given trapline.

The proposed logging roads are [currently under review](#).

An independent government agency, known as the Environmental and Social Impact Review committee ([COMEX](#)), held a public hearing in Waswanipi and has consulted planning documents and environmental impact studies.

Now the residents of Waswanipi are waiting to hear what recommendations COMEX will make to Quebec's minister of sustainable development.

'Put faith in consultation,' Grand Council urges

Concerns about the protection of the Broadback Valley forest have also pitted Waswanipi against Quebec's Grand Council of the Crees, to which the Waswanipi Cree belongs.

Last July, the Crees' Grand Chief Matthew Cooncome signed a partnership and co-operation agreement with the Quebec government, aimed at resolving a longstanding dispute with the forestry industry over a huge swath of territory of the James Bay Crees.

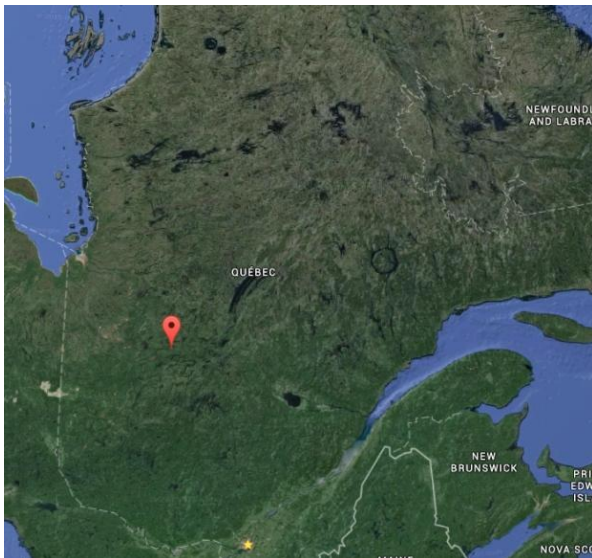
At that time, Cooncome said the agreement would not affect the Broadback River Watershed Conservation plan.

The Grand Council's executive director, Bill Namagoose, told CBC that Waswanipi should put its faith in the consultation process, which he said is going well.

Namagoose said in any event, the forestry companies don't want to cross into the Broadback River Valley forest because they would have to build a bridge.

Now that the public hearings have wrapped up, there is a 30-day waiting period to allow for stakeholders to submit further statements and comments on the project before COMEX submits its report to Quebec.

A spokesman for the Minister of Sustainable Development, David Heurtel, said the minister would not comment, as the COMEX process is still underway.



The Cree First Nation of Waswanipi, described as the "gateway to Northern Quebec," is located about 730 kilometres north of Montreal. (Google Maps)

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/waswanipi-forest-roads-threaten-caribou-1.3418531>

Nine First Nations Unite With Declaration Against LNG Tankers in B.C. Salmon Waters

Daniel Mesec

1/26/16

To the deep beat of drums, hereditary chiefs and elders from coastal and inland First Nations entered the Highlander Hotel and Convention Centre, packed with more than 300 people. They were there for a show of strength and unity against government and the onslaught of gas development in the heart of their traditional lands, the “bread basket” of the Lax Kw’alaams people.

On Saturday January 23 the [Lelu Island Declaration](#) was signed by the nine allied tribes of Lax Kw’alaams as well as other hereditary and elected chiefs from neighboring nations, sending a clear message to government and industry that the Skeena watershed will not allow the copy1 billion Pacific Northwest Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project to be built.

The tribes decreed that First Nations have not only rights, but also responsibilities, when it comes to harvesting from and sustaining the environment.

“Our ancestral knowledge, supported by modern science, confirms this area is critical to the future abundance of the wild salmon our communities rely on,” the declaration said. “It is our right and our responsibility as First Nations to protect and defend this place. It is our right to use this area without interference to harvest salmon and marine resources for our sustenance, and commercially in support of our livelihoods.”

Salmon is the link, said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) in his remarks closing the weekend summit.

“What binds people together throughout Northwest B.C. is the undeniable fact that wild salmon are at the center of our livelihoods and existence,” Phillip said. “It is essential that the Trudeau government immediately intervene in the fundamentally flawed Canadian Environmental Assessment process to ensure that the indigenous rights of the nations of the Skeena watershed are upheld.”



Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs Grand Chief Stewart Phillip signs the Lelu Island Declaration at the Salmon Nation Summit in Prince Rupert British Columbia, Canada. (Photo: Daniel Mesec)

The Salmon Nation Summit brought together hundreds of people over two days to discuss the science and politics regarding the LNG export terminal on Lelu Island proposed by Malaysian-owned Petronas, and what B.C. Premier Christy Clark has touted as the opportunity of a generation. In May of last year the Lax Kw'alaams notoriously turned down an offer of copy billion for allowing the LNG port.

In August 2015 Hereditary Chief Yahaan (Don Wesley) of the Gitwilgyoots Tribe of the Lax Kw'alaams took the situation into his own hands and started a defense camp on Lelu Island in the mouth of the Skeena River, which is home to one of the worlds largest and most sustainable wild salmon runs. And in November, the Lax Kw'alaams, along with 70 other experts, entreated Trudeau to keep LNG tankers out of B.C. waters entirely.

“The support to stop this LNG project is overwhelming,” Yahaan said during the summit. “Nations are united from the headwaters of the Skeena River to the ocean. Together, we will fight this to the end!”

LNG development has been a contentious issue of late regarding the economic future for British Columbia. With several proposals on the table over the past few years, the province is moving forward by issuing permits for a facility in Kitimat and possibly Flora Banks and Lelu Island.

But a study conducted last year by Jonathan Moore, an associate professor at Simon Fraser University who specializes in ecology and conservation of aquatic systems, suggested that such development could be too risky. Moore conducted an independent assessment of Flora and Agnew banks’ ecology and concluded that a major LNG export terminal would have irreversible consequences for spawning and juvenile salmon that inhabit the Skeena Estuary every season.

Moore’s findings, “Selling First Nations Down the River,” were published as a letter in the journal [Science](#). His results differed from those of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), a federal government agency that concluded the development of Flora and Agnew banks would not have an impact on wild salmon runs. The DFO’s more benign findings played a significant role in the permitting process that allowed test drilling to begin last August.

Trudeau's government has been pretty quiet about LNG development in B.C., despite directing his cabinet to formalize a federal crude oil tanker ban for the North Coast. But New Democratic Party (NDP) provincial legislators, as well as Member of Parliament (MP) Nathan Cullen, were all on hand to show their support for the Lelu Island defenders and the Lax Kw'alaams people as they signed the declaration.

"This project isn't going to happen. This project can't happen," Cullen said.

At a political panel during the summit, an audience member asked the politicians whether or not they would be willing to be arrested alongside protesters if Trudeau didn't shut down the PNW LNG project once and for all.

"I feel like I am with the people," said North Coast NDP Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Jenifer Rice. "I certainly support the folks occupying Lelu Island. But would I be willing to be arrested as the MLA for North Coast? I would not."

As 'boos' rang out, Rice explained that her job as MLA would be better served if she were not behind bars. She reiterated her respect and admiration for those on the frontlines willing to get arrested for the protection of Lelu Island and Flora Bank.

Since August 2015, a handful of Lax Kw'alaams members have been guarding Lelu Island, running daily patrols of Flora Banks. Gwis Hawaal (Ken Lawson) of the Gitwilgyoots tribe said that although they have faced some tough days out on the water, seeing the support generated at the summit has made a huge difference in letting them know they don't stand alone.

"That support is incredibly huge," Gwis Hawaal said. "I didn't expect to see as many strong people—chiefs, hereditary people—coming out. I thought it was just our people that were coming. Everybody that has power packed into this meeting, and it's astronomical."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/26/nine-first-nations-unite-declaration-against-lng-tankers-bc-salmon-waters-163200>

Pipeline reviews to include environmental regulations, First Nations consultations



Graham Slaughter, CTVNews.ca
Published Wednesday, January 27, 2016 10:48AM EST
Last Updated Wednesday, January 27, 2016 10:36PM EST

The Liberal government says it is “modernizing” the way Canada reviews pipelines and other resource projects, in a revamped process that considers future greenhouse gas emissions.

The new review process seeks to promote public transparency and provides funding for First Nations consultations.

The Wednesday announcement was described as a “transition step” before the Liberals establish a permanent set of rules.



Workers unload pipes at a staging area May 9, 2015. (AP Photo / Nati Harnik)



Pipeline construction materials are shown in this file photo. (Grand Forks Herald / Eric Hylden)

The interim plan immediately applies to two highly divisive pipeline proposals -- the TransMountain pipeline in B.C. and the Energy East pipeline from Alberta to New Brunswick -- and extends the government's deadline to decide the projects' fates by several months.

The Liberals are touting the changes as a step towards transparency and environmentally conscious policy. But Conservative opponents say that key questions on economic impact -- especially for hard-hit Alberta -- remain unanswered.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will meet with Alberta Premier Rachel Notley on February 3.

CTV News has learned that Trudeau will discuss a financial stimulus package tailored specifically for Alberta to help those who have lost their jobs. The province lost 19,600 jobs in 2015 -- its worst year for unemployment since 1982.

McKenna: 'No magic formula'

Speaking alongside Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr said the new process allows the public to better understand projects and voice concerns.

"Greenhouse gas emissions for all these projects should be made public. Canadians should know all these numbers," Carr said at a Wednesday press conference in Ottawa. "Without the confidence of Canadians, none of these projects will move forward."

It remains unclear exactly how much weight the government will give to environmental impact when stacked against other factors, such as the economy or social impacts.

"There's no magic formula," McKenna said. "It's looking at the economic, environmental and social impacts and then a decision is made of what is in the public interest."

NDP MP Nathan Cullen called for "a lot more clarity" on the review process so that companies can better understand how to pitch a resource-related project.

"Climate change is a factor -- is it 1 per cent of the factor, is it half?" Cullen told CTV's Power Play. "It still feels like a subjective test."

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May called the revamped reviews "an attempt to fix an unfixable process."

Delayed decisions

The government won't send current pipeline proposals back to square one, but they are adding additional review time to the consideration process.

The changes effectively push back the government's pending decision on Kinder Morgan's TransMountain twinning project another four months to December 2016.

TransCanada's Energy East project has been given an additional six months for its review period, pushing the decision to mid-2018 at the earliest. In addition, three temporary members will be added to the National Energy Board to provide greater public consultation.

"I'm looking for a process that has the confidence of Canadians. That's why we're going to take more time," Carr said.

A ministerial adviser will be appointed by the government to consult with First Nations communities that live along the pipeline routes. The adviser effectively creates a secondary review process alongside the National Energy Board review.

In the end, Carr says the cabinet will have final say on whether the pipelines are approved or denied.

TransCanada spokesperson Mark Cooper said the company is approaching the news with caution.

"We support a strong and clear regulatory framework that helps Canadians see our commitment to building and operating oil and gas pipelines in the safest and most environmentally sound way possible," he said in a statement to The Canadian Press.

"TransCanada operates in a highly regulated industry. We will continue to work with all levels of government and our regulators to ensure the continued safe and environmentally sound transportation of our natural resources to market."

Fast: A 'terrible signal to the world'

Criticism for the Liberals' handling of the pipeline file was swift. Even before the new review process was announced, Alberta Conservative MP Rachael Harder called out Trudeau during question period on Wednesday, urging him to "put down his selfie stick and get to work building these pipelines."

Conservative critic for environment and climate change Ed Fast told reporters that Wednesday's announcement is part of a "Liberal pattern of dismissing the value of Canada's resources."

He said the new review process sends a "terrible, terrible signal to the world" that Canada's natural resource projects will suffer from "political interference."

"Canada is slowly closing their doors to business and that's going to hurt Canadians badly," he said, adding that pipeline projects are important to "long-term prosperity" of the country.

Green Party Leader and B.C. MP Elizabeth May said the previous Conservative government "destroyed" the environmental assessment process in its "ideological" bid to push through pipeline projects. The Liberals' reaction will inevitably be "an imperfect response," she said.

However, May offered that the new measures are a "reasonable approach if and only if they (the government) rigorously review" all the evidence presented at pipeline assessment hearings.

Environmental groups that have openly opposed the pipelines seemed to echo May's sentiments. Adam Scott of the Environmental Defence organization said that the resource project review has been "completely broken" in Canada over the past few years, so "today's announcement is a good step...but it's certainly not a full revamp of the process that we need to see."

"The previous process never asked truly, 'Are these projects in the best interests of Canadians?'" he said, adding that "asking the right questions" will lead to better decisions on pipelines.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/pipeline-reviews-to-include-environmental-regulations-first-nations-consultations-1.2754062>

'New engagement, new co-operation' in Yukon, First Nations mining deal

'I think I learned a lot as a leader,' said Premier Darrell Pasloski

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 28, 2016 9:52 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 28, 2016 9:52 AM CT



'I think I learned a lot as a leader,' said Premier Darrell Pasloski upon announcing a new government-to-government protocol with First Nations that will bring both groups closer together on mining issues. (Sean Kilpatrick/The Canadian Press)

The Yukon government and the territory's self-governing First Nations have reached a deal to bring the two sides closer together on mining issues.

Among other things, they've developed a government-to-government protocol to improve communication. They've also come up with a work plan on mining-related priorities.

They unveiled their plan this week at the annual Mineral Exploration Roundup in Vancouver.

Premier Darrell Pasloski says this protocol can lead us to a more productive way of engaging in mining projects.

Mineral prices are down, and rocky relations between First Nations and the government have left many wondering whether it's a safe place to invest.

"I think I've learned a lot as a leader and I think as a government we've learned a lot," said Premier Darrell Pasloski, "and as a result of that what you're seeing now and what you've seen in the last year that we have been building is this new engagement this new co-operation."

Council of Yukon First Nation Grand Chief Ruth Massie says she's also pleased with the new protocol, but cautious.

"We worked very, very hard in improving our communications," she said.

"We are all in it together right now and we are all from the territory and it's for the benefit of the territory."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-first-nations-mining-protocol-1.3423551>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

First Nations want say in future of Springbank Dam



CTV London
Published Thursday, January 21, 2016 5:30PM EST

Opposition is growing to London Mayor Matt Brown's pledge to repair Springbank Dam.

The Chippewas of the Thames First Nation is raising new concerns about Brown's desire to dam a river for recreational and economic development purposes.

The First Nation leaders are discussing the future of the dam, specifically its impact on the Thames River and their desire to not see the broken dam repaired.



The Springbank Dam is seen in London, Ont.

“Our position is we would like to see the dam decommissioned,” says Chippewas of the Thames First Nation Chief Leslee White-Eye

Located downriver from the dam, the Thames has a central role in the First Nation, as evidenced by its inclusion in the community's name and artistic depiction at the centre of their council table.

White-Eye sent a letter to London city hall on Jan. 11, expressing the desire to have a role in the decision making.

“We come from the stance of nation-to-nation relationships. We have aboriginal rights being impacted; treaty rights being impacted.”

The letter is only a page and a half long, but could carry significant legal weight moving forward. It references the London Township Treaty of 1796, findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Environmental Assessment Act.

“At this point I'm not going to enter into a discussion around treaty rights and aboriginal affairs. That's not my purview. We'll leave that to our legal staff,” says Deputy Mayor Paul Hubert.

He says an environmental assessment of the Back to the River project at the Forks of the Thames and Springbank dam would allow First Nations to participate fully. Its findings would determine whether to fix or decommission the dam.

“There's a lot of opinions out there but I think we need to get the evidence and that's what the environmental assessment will do,” Hubert says.
Earlier this month, the Ministry of Natural Resources told *CTV News* it suggested the city begin a new environmental assessment to allow new public input and an evaluation of options and to look the state of the river ecosystem.

The Civic Works Committee will debate the future of Springbank dam at its meeting on Feb. 2.

Direct Link: <http://london.ctvnews.ca/first-nations-want-say-in-future-of-springbank-dam-1.2746989>

Native Americans call on Canada to kill Kinder Morgan's pipeline expansion plan

By [Elizabeth McSheffrey](#) in [News](#), [Energy](#) | January 22nd 2016

#129 of 131 articles from the Special Report: [Tar Sands Reporting Project](#)



Lummi Indian Nation members Dana Wilson (left) and Troy Olsen came all the way from their reserve in Bellingham, Washington to protest the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain expansion on Fri. Jan. 22, 2016. Photo by Elizabeth McSheffrey.

[Lummi Indian Nation](#) members Dana Wilson and Troy Olsen from their reserve Washington to protest the contentious Kinder Morgan [Trans Mountain pipeline expansion](#). They were hoping to bear witness to the National Energy Board (NEB) proceedings on the project as well, but only one of them could get into the hearing room as the 'plus one' of an intervener.

"We're here because we care about our future, the seven generations to come," said Olsen after attorney Kristen Boyles presented on behalf of Coast Salish nations in Washington, including the [Swinomish](#), [Tulalip](#), [Suquamish](#), and Lummi.

Their communities are spread from as far south in the western state as Seattle and as far north as Bellingham, less than 40 kilometres from the B.C. border.

"I believe that Canada fully endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We are Indigenous people too, so those human rights affect us," he continued.

"As a member of the Lummi Nation, my question for Canada is, will they honour those Indigenous rights?"

Threat to livelihood below the border

The Trans Mountain pipeline expansion is a proposal to add 987 kilometres of brand new pipeline to an existing system that transports 300,000 barrels of refined petroleum and crude oil from the tar sands in Alberta to refineries and terminals in Vancouver and Washington. If approved, the expansion would triple this system's capacity and, more importantly to the U.S. Coast Salish nations, send tanker traffic in the Salish Sea skyrocketing.

"The increase from this project is a seven-fold increase," Boyles told *National Observer*. "We'll go from five oil tankers going through tribal fishing grounds a month to 37 in the Salish Sea, around the San Juan Islands, and the Canadian George Islands."

If the pipeline expansion is constructed, she said, the risk of one of these tankers colliding with a commercial fishing vessels would increase by roughly 25 per cent. For fisherman like Wilson — whose father and grandfather were also fisherman — this poses a major problem.

"I'm on the radio with Victoria traffic constantly trying to guide those ships around my gear right now," he explained. "With a 25 per cent increase, I'll spend more time guiding those ships around than fishing."

"You're just a spec out there as a small fishing boat, compared to those huge tankers. It takes them a mile or so to even stop, so you have to start contacting them 10 miles away from where you're at."

The safety risk is enormous, he said, as is the threat the project poses to the marine wildlife he relies on to earn a living. Wilson catches salmon, halibut, crabs and prawns in his family's small fishing boat and is teaching his son to do the same.

Even a small oil spill of diluted bitumen, [which studies have shown is nearly impossible to clean up once it sinks in water](#), could compromise these vital commercial species.

"I don't have to read about it, I live it," he said. "That's why I think the tribe's voice is so important in this, because they're living it. Their children are going to live it."

He then pulled out his phone and showed *National Observer* a photo of his son, standing on a fishing vessel, facing a tanker near their home as proof this his child already lives it.

"He called me and asked, 'What do I do?'" said Wilson.



Dana Wilson's son, standing on the fishing vessel facing a massive tanker near their home, called his father at the moment the photo was taken, asking "What do I do?" Photo by Elizabeth McSheffrey.

A duty to consult

Prior to the American Coast Salish nations participating in the NEB process as interveners, Boyles said Trans Mountain did not consult them once through the course of its stakeholder engagement in Canada. During oral arguments before the panel, she called the company "blind" to the impact its expansion would have on Indigenous people below the border.

"The U.S. tribes are not Aboriginal people of Canada, so it has to do nothing further," she said, describing Trans Mountain's position on U.S. consultation. "Failing to consider impacts on the other side of the border matters."

Speaking with panelists, Boyles called the Salish Sea, its wildlife and resources the "economic and cultural life blood" of the tribes, and accused Trans Mountain of "callousness" with its responses to American Indigenous inquiries about the project's impact to tanker traffic in the U.S. Speaking with *National Observer* afterwards however, she called the entire affair "indefensible."

"It has been astonishing how little conversations have gone on between Trans Mountain and the interests of the United States, the tribal interests especially," she explained.

"Overall, when you look at the record and the impacts that are bound to happen to U.S. waters, it is unbelievable that this process goes forward without a much, much greater attention paid to these shared resources."

Olsen however, was less surprised given the histories of Canada and the U.S. as colonizing nations:

"Our world views have never been appreciated," he said simply.



Kirsten Boyles, attorney for the U.S. Coast Salish nations, presents before the NEB panel during the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain hearings in Burnaby, B.C. on Fri. Jan. 22, 2016. Photo by Elizabeth McSheffrey.

Indigenous rights transcend borders

In her presentation, Boyles also presented panelists with the challenge that Canada, as a signatory to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and through its own environmental and constitutional commitments, has a duty to respect the rights of all Indigenous people, regardless of the border separating it from the U.S.

Basic human rights include the right to subsistence and culture, she argued, and if Canada approves a project that impacts these rights, it is not a decision to be taken lightly.

"Transboundary effects are not to be ignored," she told *National Observer*. "For United States tribes who have lived on this land since time immemorial, this project is all wish and no reward."

To Olsen and Wilson however, the division between Canada and the U.S. shouldn't really been there in the first place.

"We're only separated by an international boundary that the Canadian and United States government didn't consult the Indigenous people on [drawing] since time immemorial," said Olsen.

"We're 10 miles from the Canadian border," Wilson agreed. "Before that border was there we were all one tribe — the same songs, the same dances, the same language is spoken."

They showed *National Observer* one last photo before departing the hearing site in Burnaby to the cheers and thanks of anti-Kinder Morgan protesters outside the building: a Lummi elder sitting on the coast of the Salish Sea with B.C. visible on the horizon.

"Anything that happens from the Fraser River down below is going to affect us," said Wilson, "and just because that border is there doesn't mean it won't."



Troy Olsen shows *National Observer* an image of a Lummi Nation elder on the Salish Sea with British Columbia visible on the horizon. Photo by Elizabeth McSheffrey.

Direct Link: <http://www.nationalobserver.com/2016/01/22/news/native-americans-call-canada-kill-kinder-morgans-pipeline-expansion-plan>

Trans Mountain pipeline expansion in limbo as 'duty to consult' takes centre stage

GEOFFREY MORGAN | January 22, 2016 | Last Updated: Jan 22 6:23 PM ET



THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darryl Dyck A man holds a sign while marching to a protest outside National Energy Board hearings on the proposed Trans Mountain pipeline expansion in Burnaby, B.C., on Tuesday January 19, 2016.

CALGARY – The process for reviewing pipeline projects in Canada is in flux, creating severe legal complications for lawyers on both sides of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

Changes are coming to the regulatory process that will affect Kinder Morgan Inc.'s Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, adding new regulatory hurdles for a project nearing the end of its current review process.

A spokesperson for Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr confirmed to Bloomberg News Friday that the federal government is developing a transition plan that will affect Trans Mountain application, just as the regulatory panel is hearing final arguments whether or not to approve the project.

"We would be very concerned about anything that would push back the deadlines for construction and the in-service date," Kinder Morgan senior director of aboriginal and legal affairs Peter Forrester said.

The federal department did not provide details on the new regulatory requirements, but lawyers for aboriginal groups along the Trans Mountain pipeline route argued this week before an NEB panel that the current process does not adequately satisfy the federal government's obligations to First Nations.

In a heated final argument Thursday, Squamish First Nation lawyer Aaron Bruce told the NEB that it cannot recommend the Trans Mountain expansion project's approval because the federal government "recognizes the current process is deficient to address First Nations concerns. We shouldn't be here today."

That argument was repeated by lawyers and chiefs of multiple First Nations, who argued the current review process is flawed and the NEB can't recommend the project's approval because the federal government has not "fully discharged its duty to consult" with affected aboriginals.

"The Crown is relying on the National Energy Board process and Squamish has big concerns with that," Bruce said.

Similarly, Stz'uminus First Nation lawyer Melinda Skeels told the NEB panel in a final argument hearing Wednesday: "By any measure, the Crown has failed to discharge its duty to consult Stz'uminus in relation to the project."

The federal government's duty to consult with First Nations was established in Supreme Court of Canada decision from 1990.

The NEB panel seemed to push back, asking lawyers for both the Stz'uminus and Squamish whether or not the current NEB review process for Trans Mountain fits

into a wider consultation process the federal government has been undertaking for several years, and will continue for years in the future.

First Nations lawyers argued that any consultation after the NEB has made its decision on Trans Mountain would be effectively meaningless, because the conditions for the project's construction would already be set.

As a result, the consultation up to this point in the process is critical and has been insufficient, they argued.

"The conditions are everything. If we can't have an opportunity to have our interests represented in those conditions regarding impacts to our Aboriginal rights and title, how can you say this process is fair? I don't understand that," Bruce said.

NEB spokesperson Tara O'Donovan said the federal government relies on the regulator's process "to the extent that it can" to fulfill its obligation to consult with First Nations.

However, she said Ottawa's Major Projects Management Office has been overseeing a multiple-agency consultation effort on the Trans Mountain expansion since the company first filed a project description back in 2013.

"Recognize that we have consulted over 130 groups and you're seeing some of those groups have said there is a lack of consultation," Forrester said, adding that Kinder Morgan has been consulting with First Nations along the expanded pipeline route since at least the beginning of 2012.

He added the president of Kinder Morgan's Canadian arm, Ian Anderson, has personally met with the "vast majority" of affected aboriginal groups along the pipeline.

The NEB is hearing final arguments for the current regulatory process this week and next in Burnaby, B.C. before shifting to Calgary in February.

Direct Link: http://business.financialpost.com/news/energy/trans-mountain-pipeline-expansion-in-limbo-as-trudeau-preps-regulatory-overhaul?_lsa=0e9e-9372

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Missing And Murdered Indigenous Women: Ministers Approve Plan To Reduce Violence

CP | By Jim Bronskill, The Canadian Press

Posted: 01/22/2016 9:55 am EST Updated: 01/22/2016 12:00 pm EST

THE CANADIAN PRESS 🇨🇦

OTTAWA — Justice and safety ministers from across the country have signed off on an approach to reduce violence against indigenous girls and women.

At a meeting in Quebec City, they also discussed legalization of marijuana, radicalization of young people, cybersecurity and physician-assisted dying.

The national framework for dealing with violence against aboriginal women — two years in the making — will help ensure governments engage closely with indigenous people, said federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould.

"We had quite a detailed discussion around a collaborative approach to addressing the challenges that indigenous peoples face," she said at the meeting's conclusion Thursday.



Fred Chartrand/The Canadian Press

*Minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould holds a news conference in Ottawa.
(Photo: Fred Chartrand/CP)*

Ministers want to work together "to ultimately do our part to end the horrible and unnecessary situation that indigenous women and girls are facing in terms of violence," Wilson-Raybould added.

The minister said she and her counterparts also talked about the coming national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

Bill C-51

Wilson-Raybould and Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale are responsible for shepherding the new Liberal government's promised review of the controversial omnibus security legislation known as Bill C-51.

The federal ministers want to hear from "as many people as we can" on revisiting the bill brought in by the previous government, Wilson-Raybould said.

"We don't have a specific timeline right now, but it is a priority of our government and we will be moving forward with that in collaboration with other ministers."

The prime minister has asked Wilson-Raybould to conduct a general review of changes to the criminal justice system and sentencing reforms over the past decade with an eye to ensuring community safety and value for money.

Criminal pardons

Goodale has committed to reviewing Conservative changes that made people wait longer and pay more to obtain a criminal pardon.

Scott Bardsley, a spokesman for Goodale, said the minister also plans to revisit the decision to begin calling the pardon a record suspension.

Bardsley said Goodale's review of the waiting period, fee and name will consider fairness, proportionality and the role that expunging a criminal record plays in rehabilitation.

A record suspension doesn't erase a person's criminal record, but can make it easier to get a job, travel and return to society.

Under the Conservative changes, lesser offenders must wait five years instead of three before they can apply for a suspension, while those who have served out a sentence for a more serious offence must wait 10 years instead of five.

In addition, the cost of applying quadrupled to \$631 from \$150.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/22/ministers-develop-plan-to-address-violence-against-aboriginal-women-girls_n_9044916.html

Missing women's inquiry should include aboriginal men, says Ernie Crey

UBC Okanagan researchers found aboriginal men account for 71 per cent of aboriginal homicide victims

By On the Coast, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 22, 2016 5:41 PM PT Last Updated: Jan 22, 2016 5:41 PM PT



The majority of B.C.'s aboriginal people live in cities now, and the Northwest Indigenous Council plans to lobby all levels of government for them, spokesperson Ernie Crey said. (Wawmeesh Hamilton)

Missing and murdered indigenous men and boys should be part of a national inquiry into Canada's missing and murdered women, says a First Nations leader.

Ernie Crey, the chief councillor of [the Cheam First Nation](#) in B.C., is calling on those who believe that the inquiry should be expanded to make their voices heard in Ottawa — as the government is [still in the early days of consulting with stakeholder groups](#).

[According to statistics gathered by UBC Okanagan professor Adam Jones](#) and his research assistant, Penny Handley, of approximately 2,500 aboriginal people who were murdered in Canada between 1982 and 2011, 71 per cent were male.

Crey said he recognizes that adding this element to the inquiry "might make it an enormous challenge," but said the statistics are undeniable.

"We simply can't turn our backs on this," Crey told [On the Coast](#) host Stephen Quinn.

Lost own brother

"It has to be put in the hands of government as to how they might handle it and how they might respond to it, because the inquiry that's going to take place around women is going to be an enormous undertaking unto itself, and this would add a whole new dimension to it. But it's an important one."

It's a very personal issue for Crey as well — his own brother Gordon was murdered in the early 1970s.

"My brother's death occurred in suspicious circumstances, and I never did get any report from the police," he said.

"Many of us have lost a father or a brother or the like, and many of them have died in mysterious circumstances or suspicious circumstances, or the people responsible for the death of aboriginal men or boys have received light sentences."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/missing-women-s-inquiry-should-include-aboriginal-men-says-ernie-crey-1.3416631>

MMIW consultations 'healing' for sister of missing indigenous woman

Carleen Marie went missing in Akwesasne in 1988, and her remains were found 7 weeks later

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 23, 2016 11:04 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 23, 2016 11:04 PM ET



Cheryl McDonald, from Akwesasne in southwestern Quebec, says her sister left home one day in 1988 and never came back. (CBC)

As the Liberal government holds nationwide pre-inquiry consultations on missing and murdered indigenous women, people like Cheryl McDonald, a Mohawk woman from Kanesatake, are sharing their painful stories.

McDonald was among indigenous people who met with federal ministers Jody Wilson-Raybould, Carolyn Bennett, and Mélanie Joly in Montreal on Friday.

McDonald's sister, Carleen Marie McDonald, went missing in Akwesasne in 1988.

Her remains were found by a deer hunter seven weeks later.

Cheryl McDonald spoke with CBC Montreal's *Homerun* about the consultations and why it's important for First Nations people to share stories of their missing and murdered loved ones.

Here is some of that conversation:

On why she attended the consultation



Cheryl McDonald (centre), her mother Agnes Beauvais McDonald (left) and Viviane Michel, president of the Quebec Native Women Inc., listen to speeches during the release of a report on missing and murdered indigenous women in Quebec last month. (Paul Chiasson/Canadian Press)

This is my second pre-inquiry attendance. It was really just to be a peaceful presence for the families that are coming out for the first time.

For the first time, they're actually coming together as a group with other First Nations and [they] see that they aren't suffering in silence alone anymore, that there is an awakening of families coming forward and telling their tragic and painful stories of loss, and looking for answers, looking for a place where they can express that pain.

On what the consultations are like

Everyone who wants to has a chance to say something. They're given the time they need, they're given support. The ministers are there, listening. It's really [like a] family-structured gathering. You see people from all ages and more and more men coming to these things.

I wasn't sure if I was going to speak again — it's difficult to tell the story over and over again. It seems every time I tell it, it changes a little bit. But it's because I'm learning to get my voice back. I'm learning to tell and share what impact that had on me to lose a sister like that.

On why it's important for First Nations people to share their stories



People gathered on Parliament Hill in November in a solemn ceremony in memory of missing, murdered and abused aboriginal women and children. (Alistair Steele/CBC)

Being a First Nations person and growing up like that, we do seem kind of stoic in some way. We don't really protest and complain too much and so we don't share like we should.

In my own past, I was a tough Mohawk woman and I could handle everything —no one saw that soft side of me, that injured side that was afraid, and stood back behind the crowd.

[The consultations are]

a chance for me to share, not only my tears, but also my strength, and hope and belief that this inquiry is going to do something.

On sharing her sister's story

For 27 years, nobody talked about her — not even in my immediate family circles. [We thought] she was gone and we'll never know what really happened and so we have to move forward.

It wasn't until I came out to one of the gatherings in Quebec that I finally showed that side of me that I showed no one, including my husband who I've been married to for 31 years.

There's a healing in that.

On what it was like to meet the federal ministers



Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett and Minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould, along with Minister of Canadian Heritage Mélanie Joly, met with family members and loved ones of missing and murdered indigenous women in Montreal on Jan. 22 (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

I knew Jody Wilson-Raybould, [but] I didn't know the other ones. They were just like any other woman I've met who is caring, loving and attentive — and then I find out they're ministers.

We're hugging each other, we are creating this kind of family, and for the first time, I have a sense of belonging, that my suffering was not for nothing, that I will help others to get to that point.

On how optimistic she is about the inquiry

Our women, and even our men now, we're finding their bodies and there's no one held responsible for that.

Will it ever give me answers I've been searching for? Maybe not. But knowing that we're going to save lives and give hope and healing, it's going to be worth it for that.

We need to get to know each other, First Nations and Canadians. We're in this country together and I think some kind of bonding, connection is going to take place.

This story has been condensed and edited for length and clarity

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/mmiw-consultations-cheryl-mcdonald-1.3417403>

Saskatchewan senator introduces bill for missing and murdered aboriginal women

Senator Lillian Dyck's bill would make being an aboriginal female victim an aggravating circumstance

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 27, 2016 10:19 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 28, 2016 7:23 AM CT



- Senator Lillian Dyck says her bill would send a signal to Canada about the value of indigenous women's

A Saskatchewan senator has introduced a bill to help protect aboriginal women and girls.

Senator Lillian Dyck spoke to *Bill S-215: An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing for violent offences against Aboriginal women)* at second reading in the Senate chamber on Wednesday.

The bill would amend the Criminal Code to make being an aboriginal female victim an aggravating circumstance for the offences of murder, assault, and sexual assault.

That means that the court system would be required to take aboriginal female identity into account during sentencing.

A press release from Senator Dyck's office explained that making the measure mandatory eliminates bias against the victim, ensuring her case will not be treated as less serious in nature compared to any other female.

"Amending the criminal code in this manner sends a strong signal that Canadian society as a whole values all women and girls, whether or not they are Aboriginal," the statement said, adding it will also act as a deterrent for future crimes against aboriginal women.

A 2014 RCMP report found that aboriginal women and girls are three times more likely to go missing and four times more likely to be murdered compared to other Canadian females.

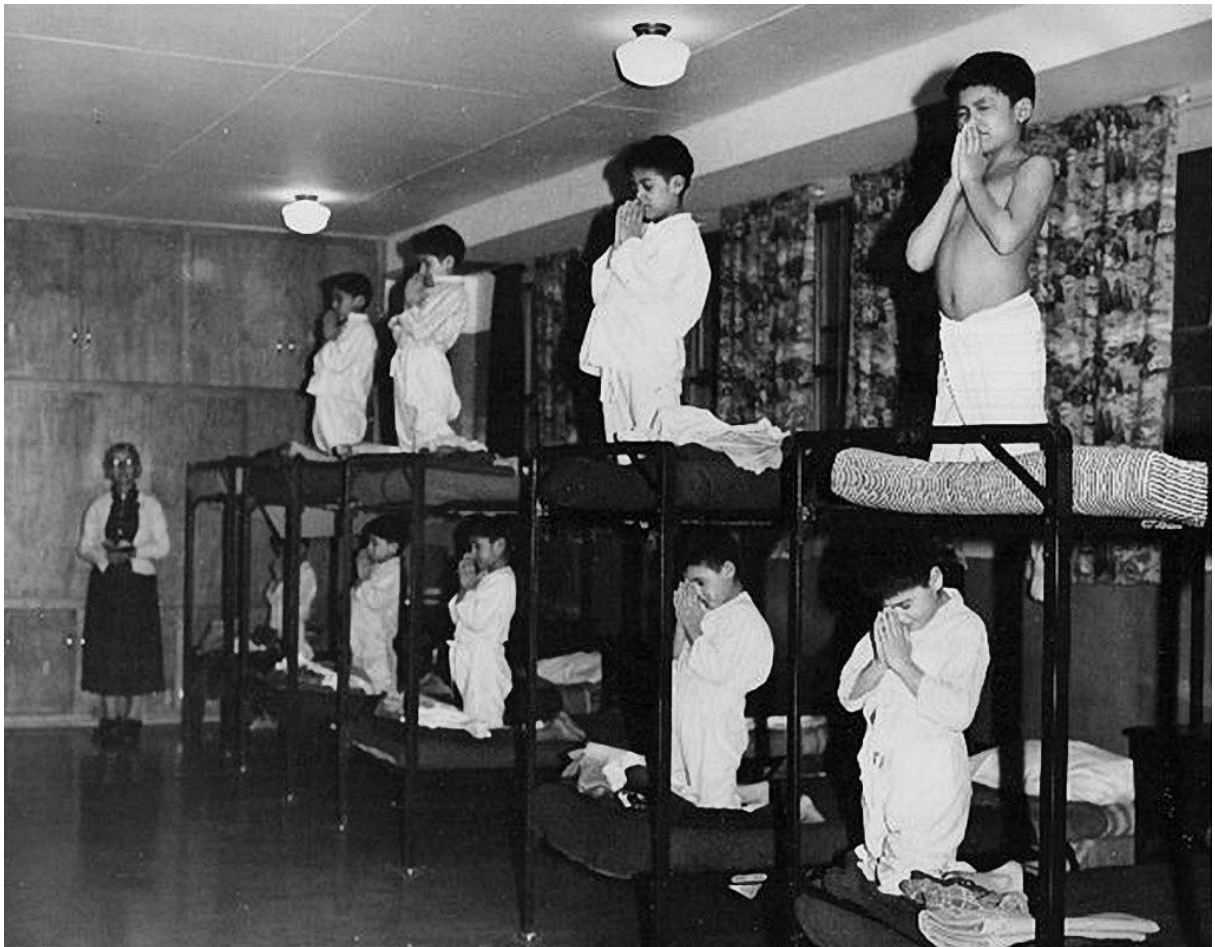
A member of the Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan, Dyck has been a senator since 2005.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/sask-senator-introduces-bill-for-missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-1.3423161>

Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, & '60s Scoop

Simon Fraser University creates memorial for residential school students

THE CANADIAN PRESS JANUARY 26, 2016 9:55 AM



A memorial honouring First Nations, Metis and Inuit children who attended residential schools will be built at Simon Fraser University's Burnaby campus.

BURNABY - A memorial honouring First Nations, Metis and Inuit children who attended residential schools will be built at Simon Fraser University's Burnaby campus.

A release from the university says the memorial will be part of the Faculty of Education's new Aboriginal Gathering Place.

The director of the Office for Aboriginal Peoples at S.F.U. says the process is just beginning, but the memorial will likely include a copper or bronze wall plaque with map, locations and names of B.C. residential schools.

William Lindsay says it will also have a small stone or bronze statue of a hugging mother and child figure, a memorial garden with traditionally used plants, and an outdoor classroom.

He says the space will become a place of honour, a place to remember and a place to learn.

A date for the completion of the memorial has not been set but Lindsay says it will take several years as renovations continue within the Faculty of Education.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/simon+fraser+university+creates+memorial+residential+school/11677053/story.html>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Bundy Militia Compared To ISIS For Pawing Through Native American Artifacts, Destroying Sites

Kristina Killgrove ,

CONTRIBUTOR



A small group of armed activists remain at a remote US federal wildlife refuge in Oregon, vowing to leave only if asked by local residents. (Photo credit: Robb Kerr/AFP/Getty Images)

JAN 21, 2016 @ 08:45 PM

From the outset of the now weeks-long occupation of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Oregon by the militia led by Ammon Bundy, archaeologists as well as members of the Burns Paiute Tribe have been concerned for ancient artifacts and sacred spaces. Their fears were realized this week as news reports discussed bulldozing of land and a video surfaced of armed militants rifling through boxes of artifacts archived at the refuge. And many on [Twitter](#) TWTR +0.00% are already making a parallel between the militia and the work of ISIS in destroying world heritage sites.

Indian Country Today Media Network (ICTMN) has the best coverage thus far, in a piece by Jacqueline Keeler titled, "[Oregon Militia Nuts Hold Paiute History, Artifacts Hostage](#)." There are thousands of artifacts stored in the building that is being occupied by the militia, and the Burns Paiute are worried. ICTMN reports that "the tribe is demanding federal action under both the [Archaeological Resources Protection Act](#) of 1979 and a 'protection against bad men' provision the tribe signed with the United States in 1868." This is not the first time Bundy supporters have damaged or held Native American heritage hostage. In 2014, [half a dozen people rode ATVs through Recapture Canyon in Utah](#), destroying ancient Puebloan home sites. And petroglyphs in Gold Butte, Nevada, may also have been defaced by Bundy supporters. Chairperson Charlotte Rodrique of the Burns Paiute tribe told ICTMN that just a few days ago "they took a bulldozer and built a line around the refuge headquarters."

The Bundy folks put out a 3-minute video showing themselves looking through box upon box of Native American artifacts in the basement archive of the refuge:

LaVoy Finicum and others talk repeatedly about how they want to return the artifacts to "their rightful owners." They deplore the conditions in which the artifacts are kept: "there's a rat's nest in here; this is how we found them. [...] Native artifacts, they just kind of boxed them up and let them rot here." Further, they complain that the artifacts have different dates on them, some dating back to the 1980s. Finicum looks at the camera and feigns concern: "So my question is, Why? Why do they just keep them down here? Why are they locked away here for nobody—but for them to look at whenever they come

down here. This needs to be taken care of, and so we're reaching out to the Paiute people in as sincere a manner as we can. Please, let's open up a dialogue."

On the face of it, this doesn't seem like a bad sentiment. For an organization obsessed with individual rights, it makes sense in a way: Finicum and others may actually be convinced that the Paiute objects need rescuing. But their paternalistic concern for people they perceive as downtrodden by the US government is misplaced. The Paiute agree that the objects need to be rescued — but rescued from Finicum and the other militia members. Rodrique is further quoted in Daily Kos as saying that "we feel strongly because we have had a good working relationship with the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge" prior to the occupation. "We view them as a protector of our cultural rights in that area." The Paiute helped archive the artifacts at the refuge in the first place.



Burns Paiute tribe chair Charlotte Rodrique addresses reporters during a press conference in response to the armed occupation of the nearby Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Burns, Ore. (Photo credit: AP Photo/Manuel Valdes)

The [Daily Kos](#) quotes tribal council member [Jarvis Kennedy](#) as saying, "They just need to get the hell out of there. They didn't ask anybody, we don't want them here." And the archaeologist for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Carla Burnside, told ICTMN that militants released photos of themselves in her office rifling through sensitive archaeological files. Fish and Wildlife Service assistant director of external affairs, Jason Holm, [further told Oregon Public Broadcasting](#) that the road the occupiers recently bulldozed is "an archaeological site important to the Burns Paiute Tribe." They also removed a fence that Holm said was "a deterrent to keep fire crews from driving across the archaeological site."

The actions of the Bundy-led militia almost certainly go against ARPA, in spite of what Finicum and friends seem to think. Legal protections have been put into place over

decades in the US to protect Native sites, artifacts, and burials and to help right the wrongs done to Native archaeological remains since Europeans first landed. Finicum may think he is doing the right thing in his misguided attempt to repatriate artifacts that are being stored at the refuge by choice and by design, but the Paiute vehemently disagree. And as it's their heritage, it's their right to rebuff Finicum and to bring federal action against the occupants who have no idea how to handle the artifacts or how to safeguard their sacred sites.

Rodrique's quote in ICTMN sums it up for me, and for many of the people in my Twitter feed outraged by this brash disregard for the opinions of Natives: "I don't know what these people are doing... if they are doing things to just get a rise or to be a martyr — all they are doing is making enemies out of the people they professed to support."

Kristina Killgrove is a [bioarchaeologist](#) at the [University of West Florida](#). For more osteology news, follow her on Twitter ([@DrKillgrove](#)) or like her Facebook page [Powered by Osteons](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kristinakillgrove/2016/01/21/bundy-militia-compared-to-isis-for-pawing-through-native-american-artifacts-destroying-sites/#4fcaa2375e2c>

Some Oregon schools can keep Native American Oregon State Board of Education rules



Banks High School's mascot is the Braves.

[Casey Parks | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)

By [Casey Parks | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)

on January 21, 2016 at 4:08 PM, updated January 21, 2016 at 8:36 PM

The Oregon Board of Education will allow some Oregon public schools to keep their Native American mascots.

The board had previously ruled that 14 schools with Native American mascots must choose new ones by 2017. Under a [new amendment approved Thursday](#), schools who

secure permission from one of Oregon's nine tribes can keep their Native American mascots.

Some Native Americans have been asking state leaders since 2006 to ban tribal-themed mascots such as the Warriors, Braves, Indians and Chieftains.

The state board spent years reviewing studies that said Native mascots promote discrimination, harassment of students and stereotyping. In 2012, the board ordered all schools with Native Americans mascots to choose new ones. Those who didn't could lose state funding.

Republican legislators fought back, and in 2014, the Oregon state legislature [passed a bill](#) allowing school boards and tribes to work together to keep the mascots. The bill directed the state board of education to come up with the rules for those agreements.

State officials created work groups to advise them on these rules. Last May, the board [unanimously voted not to approve an amendment](#) allowing schools to gain permission from tribes.

Thursday's decision reverses that ruling. What changed?

State officials have spent more time talking with each of Oregon's nine tribes, Department of Education spokeswoman Crystal Greene said. Some tribes and school districts have worked together to create plans that would keep the mascots and teach students more about tribal history and culture.

In Banks, for instance, members of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde have proposed an agreement that would allow the high school athletics teams to still call themselves the Braves. In exchange, the district will begin using a curriculum the tribe developed to teach its history. The district will also create a Native Club for all middle and high school students.

But activist [Sam Sachs](#) said the move is a step backward for Oregon.

"It's just extremely disappointing that they didn't have the courage to stand up for the Native American students," said Sachs, the former chair of Portland's Human Rights Commission. "They can talk to all the tribes. The nine tribes don't speak for every Native American person in Oregon or the students who have to go to these schools. It doesn't change the research. The use of these names and mascots have a negative impact on students, especially their self esteem. There's no research that says these mascots empower Native American people."

Sachs said a group of five Native American students plans to file a lawsuit against the state and the board of education this spring.

Direct Link:

http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2016/01/some_oregon_schools_can_keep_n.html

“Hold up, is that a pioneer choking a Native American to death?”: “The Daily Show” causes a major ‘oops’ with the Whitesboro official seal

"I guess if you're going to have a racist seal, why not have it here, in the deep south ... of upstate New York"

SARAH BURRIS, FRIDAY, JAN 22, 2016 05:47 AM MST



In case you didn't know, America is under attack. According to the Republicans, there is a war that has been waged on regular American assholes on behalf of the polite-police. That's right, I'm talking about the war for political correctness, and according to Thursday's "Daily Show," Trevor Noah may have helped cause it.

"Daily Show" correspondent Jessica Williams sat down with activists from the Lenape First Nations tribe to talk about the "offensive" city seal of Whitesboro, New York. Williams couldn't believe that anything could ever be more offensive than the Redskins logo, until she saw the seal which features a white pioneer choking a Native American to death. "Whitesboro. I guess if you're going to have a racist seal, why not have it here, in the deep south.... of upstate New York." Williams said.

Whitesboro's Mayor Patrick J. O'Connor aka 'Whitey McWhiterson,' however, says that the seal is absolutely not racist. "Oh, thank God, because it looks like that white man was totally choking this American Indian man to death," she told the mayor.

"The seal depicts our founder, Hough White... who was engaged in a friendly wrestling match... he did not choke [the Native American]," Mayor O'Connor claimed. "So the goal of the match was to push your opponent off balance. The seal is based on historical events that foster a good relationship between our founder and the American Indians."

Even the Lenape acknowledge that the Native Americans and the white settlers were friends in the town. "Oh! So it's just the picture that's completely fucking horrible," Williams explained.

Interestingly, the seal was changed in 1977 to move the hands away from the neck down to the shoulders. In fact, they've changed the seal a bunch of times, but the last time they wanted to change it in 1999, there were no submissions. So, Williams provided several ideas that were more friendly and one that included two Native Americans choking a British Red-Coat to death. The mayor announced a vote. Then it caused a major international news story. Oops.

Direct Link:

http://www.salon.com/2016/01/22/hold_up_is_that_a_pioneer_choking_a_native_american_to_death_the_daily_show_causes_a_major_oops_with_the_whitesboro_official_seal/

Evo Morales celebrates 10 years as Bolivia's 'indigenous socialist' president

Thousands of Ayamara and Quechua people gathered to honor country's first indigenous leader, whose term could be extended to 2025 after referendum



Bolivian president Evo Morales, center, arrives for speech to mark 10 consecutive years in office. Photograph: ABI/Handout/EPA

Jonathan Watts in La Paz, Bolivia

Friday 22 January 2016 18.11 GMTLast modified on Friday 22 January 201621.26 GMT

In a riot of colour, noise and statistics, Bolivian president [Evo Morales](#) marked 10 years of his “indigenous socialist” rule on Friday, one month before a referendum that could extend his period in office until 2025.

The celebrations for the country’s first indigenous leader and longest-serving president saw thousands of formerly marginalized Aymara and Quechua people gather outside the national congress building in Plaza Murillo in La Paz, alongside representatives from indigenous groups from neighbouring Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Peru.

Many held aloft photographs of Morales, a former coca grower who is credited with improving indigenous rights through social programmes and the introduction of a pluri-national constitution that recognised the multi-ethnic diversity of the country.

The presence of the “cholas” and “cholitas” with their distinctive bowler hats, colourful shawls and llama-emblazoned banners was itself a sign of change as members of indigenous groups were once refused access to the plaza and other central areas because they were seen as belonging to a servant class.



Bolivian indigenous women sit and chew coca leaves at Murillo Square during a ceremony that marks 10 years of President Evo Morales’s administration. Photograph: David Mercado/Reuters

The economic situation in Bolivia has also improved from a low base thanks to a rapid expansion of gas exploitation, mining and soy production. Between 2006 and 2014, Bolivia notched up an average growth of 5.1%, one of the highest in the Americas.

Key industries have been nationalised and their revenues channeled into welfare programs and infrastructure projects, such as the cable car systems that have transformed the lives of many living on the periphery of this spectacular Andean city, which sits at 3,650m altitude.

Despite opening up the country to massive mineral exploration, particularly by Chinese companies, Morales claims he is focussed on securing a balance between development and environmental protection.

For Thursday's anniversary, he paid homage to Pachamama (Mother Earth) at Kalasasaya, a pre-Incan temple at Tiahuanaco where the ancients believed the Door of the Sun could be found.

"With this small but very important act, I would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude for these 10 years of service to the Bolivian people," Morales said.

Friday's ceremonies were more political in nature. Speaking to congress, the president recalled how he had once been expelled from the parliament building and was accused of being a drug trafficker and terrorist.

"Peace can only be achieved through social justice," he said before turning to a long list of achievements over the past 10 years, including a fall in inflation from 11.5% to 6.3%, a tripling of per-capita income, and steady falls in poverty and inequality.

After Morales' nearly five-hour speech, a presidential parade passed along red carpets on the street, which were lined with an honour guard. The streets thronged with revellers, with music by military bands and indigenous groups.

Morales first came to power in 2006, following victories by other leftist leaders in the region, including Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Raphael Correa in Ecuador and Ignacio Lula de Silva in Brazil.

While many other leftwing movements have faltered due to slowing economies, falling commodity prices and voter anger at bribery scandals, Morales has remained popular.

Although he has also been challenged over corruption and environmental destruction, he won a third term with a landslide victory in 2014, and is now seeking a revision of the constitution that would allow him to run again, potentially up to 2025. This has prompted concerns that he is putting his desire to cling to power above democratic term limits.

A referendum on the subject will take place on 21 February. Morales is expected to win, according to the latest polls, although the gap has narrowed.

On the streets, views were mixed. Pamela Guitierrez, a 28-year-old graphic design student from El Alto, said Morales had earned more time. “He has done a lot for us. Other presidents promised a great deal and delivered only instability. Evo is the opposite. He has really put Bolivia on the map.”

But others were unhappy about the proposed change. Eduardo Lopez, a 29-year-old student, said he plans to vote no next month because he believes 19 years is too long even for a good president like Morales. “They are trying to change the constitution just to benefit two people, the president and vice-president. It’s like changing the rule of the game halfway through.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/22/evo-morales-bolivia-10-years-president-indigenous-socialist>

Indigenous Peoples’ Day bill inspired by Fort Lewis College student

State legislation follows effort by Durango

By Peter Marcus
Herald Denver Bureau

Article Last Updated: Friday, January 22, 2016 9:55am



Enlarge photo

Russell Contreras/Associated Press file photo

The Legislature will examine replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day, following in the footsteps of the Durango City Council. The proposed legislation was inspired by Fort Lewis College student Ruthie Edd.

DENVER – A state lawmaker has proposed replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day, following in the footsteps of the Durango City Council.

Rep. Joe Salazar, D-Thornton, said he was inspired by Ruthie Edd, the Fort Lewis College student who pushed for the change in Durango. Edd argued that Indigenous Peoples' Day is a much more accurate historical reflection.

The Durango City Council earlier this month backed her proposal.

Salazar took note, responding with legislation to accomplish the same thing statewide. Columbus Day falls on the second Monday of October.

“It provided an awful lot of encouragement for us to move forward,” Salazar said of the Durango effort. “I’m very proud of the students down there.”

For proponents of the change, the issue is about not wanting to honor Columbus, who they say engaged in genocide and slavery.

Those on the other side, however, say the move would erode their heritage and tradition as descendents of European Americans. They add that Columbus Day has been a part of their lives since childhood. The issue is especially personal for Italian Americans, who feel robbed by no longer being able to celebrate Columbus.

Some suggest having Indigenous Peoples' Day on a different day than Columbus Day.

But Edd said honoring Indigenous Peoples' Day on Columbus Day is a way for Coloradans to embrace their true history. While miners and early settlers seem to get much of the attention, Edd – who is a member of the Navajo Nation – pointed out that it all started with American Indians.

“It’s a good platform to talk about these issues, to really heal from them for native people, and then for the state to both acknowledge that this was done and help everyone heal,” Edd said.

But the state legislation faces an uphill battle in a divided Legislature, where Republicans control the Senate and Democrats hold the House. Salazar said he has had trouble convincing Republicans to support the effort.

“The Republican side is seen as very removed and racist when it comes to black and brown issues,” Salazar said.

Republican Rep. Lori Saine of Firestone decided not to support the legislation, but took issue with the way Salazar characterized Republicans' opposition to the measure.

“If that’s going to be the tonality this session, if that’s what we’re starting out with, is calling Republicans ‘racist,’ I think the voters are really tired of that argument, but I guess we’ll find out,” Saine said.

Edd said her quest will continue, even if the state bill fails. She plans to take the issue across La Plata and Montezuma counties.

“I won’t stop,” Edd said. “As long as there are people who are passionate about it, this issue will continue to be raised.”

See more at: <http://www.the-journal.com/article/20160122/NEWS01/160129942/0/Frontpage/Indigenous-Peoples%E2%80%99-Day-bill-inspired-by-Fort-Lewis-College-student#sthash.62GEFuSK.dpuf>

Whitesboro drops 'racist' seal: Sign of the times for Native Americans?

A decades-long debate over the Whitesboro, N.Y., seal has led to 'victory' for Native Americans who said it was offensive to their heritage. Are America's first people gaining more recognition?

By Lucy Schouten, [Staff](#) JANUARY 23, 2016



A New York village has responded to national news controversy by redesigning its seal, after a vigorous debate over whether it represented racism or a nod to the area's history.

The Whitesboro, N.Y., emblem features a wrestling match between founder Hugh White and an Oneida Indian. Mr. White won, gaining the respect of the local tribe, but critics have said the [seal depicts an inappropriate racist viewpoint](#), the Associated Press reported.

"The city of Whitesboro, NY proudly displays what looks like a European settler choking, or violently handling, a Native American man," wrote Ben Miller, a Native American with heritage in several tribes, wrote in a petition to change the seal last summer. "But to me, this seal is anything but respectful to my people and my heritage."

The logo has been debated for years, and one Native American organization sued Whitesboro in the 1970s. That the change is coming now could be emblematic of a broader shift in how Americans consider native people.

"This is but one of many important examples of communities taking welcome steps to be inclusive and promote our region's commitment to civility," the Oneida Nation CEO Ray Halbritter said in a statement after the change, the AP reported.

The most nationally visible debate has [occurred in the sports arena](#), as Native American groups, President Obama, and even Adidas have encouraged sports

teams to drop Native American names or mascots, including "Warriors," "Braves," and especially "Redskins."

Notably, the Washington Redskins NFL team owner Daniel Snyder told USA Today the "[Redskins](#)" name was staying, even as government agencies, major news publications, and others boycotted the name.

"We'll never change the name," he said. "It's that simple. NEVER — you can use caps."

Conversely, the University of Utah [signed a five-year agreement in 2014](#) to continue using the nickname "Utes," the local tribe for which the state of Utah is named, the Deseret News reported. This case showed deference to the local tribe, however, because although Native American groups outside Utah complained, the Ute Tribe has said the nickname promotes awareness of their heritage.

The trend toward altering historical symbols, statues, and buildings as a tool for inclusion has been pushed by black Americans as well, including the removal of monuments to white Americans who espoused the race-motivated sentiments of their day.

One example is the University of Maryland, which changed a stadium named after Harry Clifton "Curley" Byrd, the University's president from 1936 to 1954, to "Maryland Stadium." The contention was that Byrd was a strict segregationist, and the university [wanted to distance itself from his views](#), The Christian Science Monitor reported.

"History is not about the past," wrote university President Wallace Loh in [suggesting the change](#). "It concerns today's debates about the past."

African Americans have arguably made more progress than indigenous people in scrubbing the American landscape of hateful or racist symbols and celebrating their heritage. For example, Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Black History Month in February are longstanding holidays that have honored black Americans for years, yet native Americans are only recently finding similar holiday recognition. The latest effort is to [change the existing Columbus Day holiday](#) to Indigenous Peoples Day, reported The Christian Science Monitor's Molly Jackson:

South Dakota and Berkeley, Calif., were among the first to pay attention, choosing to use the second Monday in October to [honor the New World's first](#)

[inhabitants](#) instead of its 15th century newcomers. . . .Further protests seemed to fall on deaf ears, until a sudden wave of Columbus cancellations in the past two years: [10 more cities have joined the list](#), from Albuquerque to Seattle to St. Paul. This new wave may represent a broader shift in how Americans view Native American rights, or at least the growing local political influence of indigenous groups.

Direct Link: <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2016/0123/Whitesboro-drops-racist-seal-Sign-of-the-times-for-Native-Americans>

Miss Native American Plays Tooth Fairy

ICTMN Staff

1/23/16

Kristina Hyatt, Miss Native American USA 2015-16, is teaming up with America's ToothFairy: National Children's Oral Health Foundation to reach out to Native children across the country through the America's Tooth Fairy Smile Drive.

The Smile Drive, which will focus on saving young smiles across Indian country, coincides with National Children's Dental Health Month in February. Hyatt and America's ToothFairy will collect toothbrushes, toothpaste, and other oral health care products for Native children.

"Pediatric dental disease, although preventable, is the number one chronic childhood disease in the United States. According to the Indian Health Service, American Indian and Alaska Native preschoolers have the highest levels of tooth decay in the U.S.," says a press release from the Miss Native American USA Organization. "By grade three, 91 percent of American Indian and Alaskan Native children have experienced tooth decay and 72 percent have unfilled cavities. Left untreated, tooth decay can cause severe pain, embarrassment, life-threatening infections and even death."

Hyatt will start a speaking tour of reservations at Pine Ridge, where 40 percent of children suffer from moderate to urgent dental needs, on February 21. With the help of America's ToothFairy and Hyatt's Eastern Band of Cherokee in North Carolina she will present oral health care kits during her speaking presentations.

How can you help? Hyatt and the Miss Native American USA Organization have set up a [donation page](#) to help cover travel costs. America's ToothFairy and the Miss Native American USA Organization are also looking for volunteers to host local Smile Drives, as well as donations for the Toothbrush Fund. To volunteer, or donate visit the [America's ToothFairy website](#).

In February 2015, Hyatt hosted a Smile Drive in Cherokee, North Carolina where more than 5,000 oral care products were collected and donated to local youth centers.

Hyatt, the reigning Miss Native American USA, is a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and is a dental hygienist. She graduated from Asheville-Buncombe

Technical Community College and currently works at the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Children's Dental Program.

"We have our differences when it comes to our cultures and traditions, but one thing we all have in common, is that the most beautiful thing we can wear is our smile," Hyatt said in the press release.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/23/miss-native-american-plays-tooth-fairy-162985>

Native American Veterans Honored During Legislative Sessions

POSTED: 02:22 PM CST Jan 23, 2016



PIERRE, S.D. -

The South Dakota Department of Tribal Relations has joined with the Department of Veterans Affairs to honor Native American veterans at state-tribal relations events during the legislative session.

The tribal relations agency says the two days of events will begin Jan. 27.

Secretary of Tribal Relations Steve Emery says it's an opportunity to learn about tribal veterans' challenges and opportunities.

Larry Zimmerman is secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

He says the agency looks forward to working with the nine tribal nations in the state and celebrating the relationships into the future. Zimmerman says Native American veterans have a "long and illustrious history of fighting for this country's freedom."

Tribal leaders and Gov. Dennis Daugaard will speak at a ceremony in the Capitol on Jan. 28.

Direct Link: <http://www.kdlt.com/news/local-news/-native-american-veterans-honored-during-legislative-sessions/37598826>

THE TIME MARLON BRANDO BOYCOTTED OSCARS TO PROTEST HOLLYWOOD'S TREATMENT OF NATIVE AMERICANS

BY [RYAN BORT](#) ON 1/23/16 AT 9:13 AM



Native American activist Sacheen Littlefeather, left, refused the Best Actor award on Marlon Brando's behalf. YOUTUBE

For the second year in a row, only white actors were recognized when the Oscar nominations were announced earlier this month. People were upset, and the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite began trending immediately. Spike Lee, Jada Pinkett Smith, Will Smith and others have announced they will boycott the ceremony. Mark Ruffalo, who is nominated for Best Supporting Actor, considered boycotting as well, but ultimately decided to attend in support of victims of clergy abuse. Can you imagine, though, the tension in the room if Ruffalo, a prominent nominee, were to have boycotted? What about if he actually won and wasn't there to accept the award? It would have been a powerful gesture, to say the least. This recalls the time Marlon Brando boycotted the Oscars, in 1973, when he also was nominated—and not for a supporting role in an ensemble cast. No, that year the Academy would honor Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather*, and with it Brando's portrayal of Vito Corleone, one of the most iconic acting performances of all time.

Brando knew he was going to win Best Actor, which is precisely why he boycotted the ceremony in protest of Hollywood's treatment of Native Americans. Attending on his behalf was a Native American activist named Sacheen Littlefeather. When Brando's name was called, she took the stage in traditional garb before refusing to accept the statuette from presenter Roger Moore. She explained that Brando "very regrettably cannot accept this generous award, the reasons for this being...are the treatment of American Indians today by the film industry and on television in movie reruns, and also with recent happenings at Wounded Knee."

She was booed.

Later that year, Brando sat down for an interview with Dick Cavett. The seasoned interviewer was visibly intimidated by Brando's presence, and both men know it. After a few minutes of awkward banter, the host mustered up the courage to ask the question on everyone's mind. As Brando sipped from a mug, Cavett said: "If you had the Academy Awards night to do over again, would you do any of that differently?"

After a long pause, Brando said that no, he wouldn't have done anything differently. "I felt there was an opportunity," he said. "Since the American Indian hasn't been able to have his voice heard anywhere in the history of the United States, I thought it was a marvelous opportunity to voice his opinion to 85 million people. I felt that he had a right to, in view of what Hollywood has done to him."

He continued to address Hollywood's treatment of minorities:

I don't think people realize what the motion picture industry has done to the American Indian, and a matter of fact, all ethnic groups. All minorities. All non-whites. People just simply don't realize. They took it for granted that that's the way people are going to be presented, and that these cliches were just going to be perpetuated. So when someone makes a protest of some kind and says, 'No, please

don't present the Chinese this way.' ... On this network, you can see silly renditions of human behavior. The leering Filipino houseboy, the wily Japanese or the kook or the gook. The idiot black man, the stupid Indian. It goes on and on and on, and people don't realize how deeply these people are injured by seeing themselves represented—not the adults, who are already inured to that kind of pain and pressure, but the children. Indian children, seeing Indians represented as savage, ugly, vicious, treacherous, drunken—they grow up only with a negative image of themselves, and it lasts a lifetime.

It's convenient in 2016 to say that Hollywood has made a lot of progress since 1973. It has, of course, but how much of that progress is real progress? How much has Hollywood's marginalization of minorities simply been repackaged in a way that is more palatable for studio executives and moviegoers? What Brando said in 1973 is still true today: People don't realize what the motion picture industry is doing to minorities.

Earlier this week, New York Times film critic Wesley Morris—who is black—responded to the fallout following the Oscar nominations [on The Bill Simmons Podcast](#). Morris spoke about how the problem isn't necessarily the Academy, but that the black films that didn't receive nominations weren't promoted as "Oscar films" by the studios that produced them. "Despite the fact that *Straight Outta Compton* came out at the height of summer and made a lot of money, it seemed like Universal was kind of caught off guard about whether to put this movie in front of Oscar voters for consideration," he said. "Unfortunately that's how this process works. You can't organically become part of the Oscar conversation, in most cases. You have to have a studio sort of push you in front of Oscar voters." Part of the reason these films were not packaged for the Academy's consideration, Morris says, is an "institutional racism when it comes to what people in this town think 'an Oscar movie' is."

He continued: "One of the things that hurts Creed is that the Academy is used to thinking about black people in a certain way and Hollywood is used to thinking about black people in a certain way, If Creed were about a runaway slave who gets to box? If Creed were about a butler's son who gets to box?"

Ice Cube echoed this sentiment while discussing Straight Outta Compton's Best Picture snub on Power 105.1's The Angie Martinez Show. "Maybe we should've put a slave in Straight Outta Compton," he said. "I think that's where we messed up. That's where we messed up. Just one random slave for the Academy members to recognize us as a real, black movie."

So how much has really changed? It seems the only difference between 1973 and 2016 is that the ways in which minorities are portrayed—the ways in which the industry allows them to participate—are less vulgar and the racism is less explicit. Another astute point Brando made to Cavett is that the struggle of the marginalized is "block-by-block." Yes, we're talking about black actors now, but what about other minorities? Why do we need to wait for a particularly noteworthy injustice to Asian actors for their struggle to make its way onto Twitter? Why do we need to see Aziz Ansari's Master of None to consider the plight of Indian actors? Why is everything compartmentalized? George Clooney briefly attempted to expand the issue in a recent statement given to Variety regarding the lack of diversity in the Oscars. "By the way, we're talking about African-Americans," he said. "For Hispanics, it's even worse. We need to get better at this. We used to be better at it." Unfortunately for Hispanics, Asians, Indians, women and every other minority group, the block du jour is that of the black community. Everyone else will have to wait their turn.

But how do black entertainment professionals make use of the attention currently being given to their particular block? When Cavett mentioned to Brando how disturbing it was that Littlefeather's presence onstage was booed, Brando brought up how vigilance and upsetting the establishment is required in order to enact change, and how the black community has always excelled at demanding justice.

They were booing because they thought, ‘This moment is sacrosanct, and you’re ruining our fantasy with this intrusion of reality. I suppose it was unkind of me to do that, but there was a larger issue, and it’s an issue that no one in the motion picture industry has ever addressed themselves to, unless forced to. The blacks have brought about changes because they were just damn angry about it. They thumped the tub and threatened and made some noise about it. But if they had just been silent and thought, ‘Well, gradually wisdom will come to those who are in the business of the movies and they will do right by us.’ And they would never have come. We have a lot to be grateful for that the blacks were as insistent as they were that the image of blacks would change.

We’re seeing this today in the comments of Spike Lee and Jada Pinkett Smith and everyone else who has spoken out since the nominations were announced. Mark Ruffalo almost boycotted but decided against it, and with good reason. But, again, Mark Ruffalo and Spotlight certainly don’t carry the weight of Marlon Brando and The Godfather. But what about, say, Leonardo DiCaprio boycotting when he looked likely to win his long sought after first Oscar?

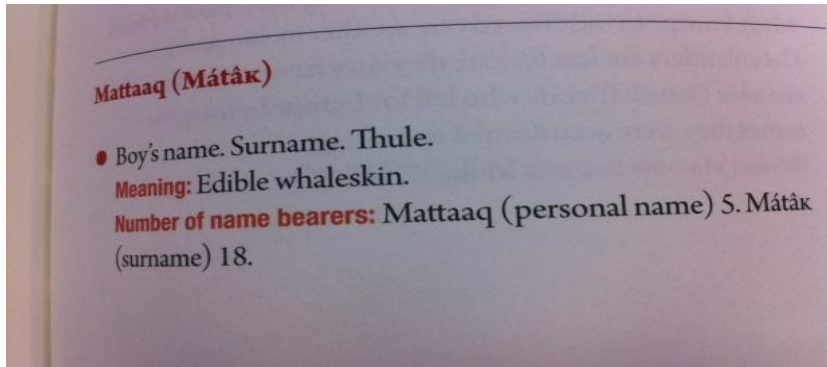
Of course, no one has the right to call DiCaprio—or anyone—to boycott or speak out, but it’s an interesting idea to entertain. After all, if any real change is going to happen in Hollywood, it isn’t likely to come block-by-block, or through a Spike Lee Instagram post; it’s going to need to come in a way that the system isn’t accustomed to dealing with. Someone is going to have to step out of the comfort zone and, as Brando did in 1973, forcefully interject a little reality into the fantasy.

Direct Link: <http://www.newsweek.com/marlon-brando-boycotted-oscars-native-americans-418545>

Kalaallit aqqi gives origins, history of Greenlandic Inuit names

Encyclopaedia-style book includes more than 400 first names, surnames and foreign names

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 23, 2016 2:48 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 23, 2016 3:08 PM CT



The meaning of the name Maataaq is explained in Kalaallit aqqi. (CBC)

A new book from Greenland explores the history and meaning behind traditional names.

Nuka Møller, author of Kalaallit aqqi, says he researched Greenlandic names dating back hundreds of years. He says a lot of traditional names stopped being used when Christianity came to Greenland and people were encouraged to give their children biblical names.

"A lot of the old formal names, they disappeared over time and were replaced," says Møller, who works as a researcher at the Greenland Language Secretariat in Nuuk.

He says the project came about because many people were requesting information from the language secretariat about the history and background of their names.



Nuka Møller is the author of Kalaallit aqqi. (Submitted by Nuka Møller)

The book lists more than 400 Greenlandic first names, surnames and foreign names in encyclopaedia form.

He says it's common practice in Greenland to name a child after someone who died. He says that still happens with Christian and Danish names, but now Møller says some people are taking their Inuk names as a second spiritual name, or even as their first name.

Kalaallit aqqi, published by the secretariat, is available in English, Danish and Greenlandic.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/kalaallit-aqqi-gives-origins-history-of-greenlandic-inuit-names-1.3417142>

January 23, 2016 - 3:33pm

National monument to honor Native American veterans



Members of the Choctaw Nation Color Guard open a gathering held last week at the Choctaw Nation Community Center in Durant, Oklahoma.

By Lynette George
Herald Democrat

DURANT, Okla. — Telling the real story and honoring the thousands of Native Americans who served in various U.S. military branches and better educating the public are the goals of the proposed National Native American Veterans Memorial. The project, almost two decades in the making, is being overseen by Kevin Gover, director of the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of the American Indian, who visited Durant Thursday to get input from local Native Americans. Choctaw Chief Gary Batton was on hand to welcome the group.

The Choctaw Nation Community Center was filled nearly to capacity with Native American veterans, their families and members of the Choctaw, Lenape, Pawnee and Chickasaw nations for a meeting on the subject last week. They came to hear Gover discuss the long-awaited monument which, if plans don't go awry, will be erected on Veterans Day in 2019. Many came to express their ideas and ask questions regarding the memorial.

The monument will be placed in Washington D.C. on the mall next to the National Museum of the American Indian, which is part of the Smithsonian Institute. There will also be permanent and rotating displays inside the museum. Gover explained that after years of work, they have been given a green light to begin getting input from the 533 federally recognized American Indian tribes, as well as those who aren't federally-recognized, on what they would like to see the memorial become. He stressed, and many in the audience agreed, that the true story of the Native Americans who served in the military from Revolutionary War times up to now, hasn't been told. The goal of creating the memorial is not just to honor the Native American veterans, but to create an avenue which brings the story to the general public as easily as possible.

"The charter — direction — from Congress is to educate Americans about Native American service," Gover said. "One of the things we're already doing is working on a tribal banner exhibition. We'll send copies of that exhibition through the nation to begin to tell this grand story of Native American service."

After getting input from as many tribe members as possible throughout the country, the committee handling the project will create a prospectus outlining the project and its meaning. The committee is being co-chaired by Chickasaw Nation Lt. Governor Jefferson Keel, who was present in Durant, and former U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Northern Cheyenne). The committee will then put out a call worldwide for submissions of artwork for the memorial. A group of veterans who are experts in art and projects of this sort will then choose a top entry and turn it over to Gover for final review and approval.

A number of audience members in Durant spoke Thursday, giving their views and asking questions. Among the ideas were special recognition for female Native American veterans, Vietnam veterans and Native American mothers who lost children in service to the country. Others asked whether all the tribes could submit artwork representing their individual cultures, which could be displayed in some manner at the site. One veteran suggested contacting all the veterans groups associated with the various tribes and using the information they already have to add to an online educational site Gover said was also being discussed.

Gover stressed that all ideas are being considered carefully. He noted that the size of the site on which the monument will be erected won't allow for displays from every single tribe at the same time, but did say that there was a possibility of rotating flags or other types of items sent in by the tribes. He added that, as the Choctaw Nation was the first stop on the journey to meet with all the tribes, these questions and the details would eventually be ironed out.

"The challenge of this memorial is to tell a story which is very complex," Gover said. "We have to find a way to get that story across (to visitors) in a space that's not that big ... The museum can help people understand not just native American history, but their own history. The story of Native American veterans is central to the story of the United States itself. There's not some separate thing. Those things are inseparable. Native

American history is American history and American history cannot be American history without Native Americans in it.”

For more information, go to www.AmericanIndian.si.edu or send an email to NM4I-NativeVeteransMemorial@si.edu.

- See more at: <http://heralddemocrat.com/news/local/national-monument-honor-native-american-veterans#sthash.TjhFyAz3.dpuf>

Scholarships to Space? Natives of All Ages Are Invited to Space Camp!

Lisa J. Ellwood

1/24/16

Two of my nerdiest interests have always been astronomy and space travel. As a ‘70s kid, [Star Trek](#) and [Close Encounters of the Third Kind](#) were big inspirations – and [NASA & European astronauts](#) and scientists [have said the same](#) over the years. European astronaut and die-hard Trekkie [Samantha Cristoforetti even tweeted a photograph of herself wearing a Star Trek Voyager uniform aboard the International Space Station](#) last year. To say that I was green with envy would be quite an understatement.

There weren’t many opportunities to do anything about my love of Space as a public school kid in inner-city West Philadelphia. There were no science fairs or clubs for us and poor aptitude aside, teachers made me hate my required math and science courses. It was enough just to squeak by with less-than-stellar grades since, reinforced by overt and subliminal messages in my surroundings, a disadvantaged kid like me growing up in the shadow of the Ivy League stood no chance of becoming an astronomer or astronaut. Fortunately, today’s Native youth have a better chance to explore these subjects and aim high given support.

Based at the [U.S. Space & Rocket Center®](#) in Huntsville, Alabama, [Space Camp®](#) has given youth the opportunity to push the boundaries of human exploration since 1982. [Dr. Wernher von Braun](#), former director of the [NASA Marshall Space Flight Center](#) and the rocket scientist whose propulsion work led to the Apollo manned Space flights, championed his belief that young people who were excited about space should be able to have hands-on experience.

Dr. von Braun’s dream was finally made reality in the form of Space Camp thanks to [Edward O. Buckbee](#), the first director of the U.S. Space & Rocket Center.

Today’s [space exploration](#), [robotics](#), and [aviation](#) Space Camp programs cover a variety of aptitudes, interests, and needs for youth and adults. Week-long camps and day camps are available for fourth grade through high school-age students (ages 9-18), student groups, and Boy and Girl Scouts. Additional programs are offered for disabled trainees who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, and those with other special needs. Space Camp programs are also available for adults, educators, corporate groups, and families. Family programs may include Elders, extended family members, and children as young as seven.

Since its inception, [Space Camp](#) has hosted over 600,000 trainees, including the first-ever Oglala Lakota student in 2012 - Spencer Proffer Scholarship* winner [Calletano “Tano”](#)

[Fillspipe-Rodriguez](#), at the time a 10 year-old Red Cloud Middle School student on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Fancy Bebamikawe is Odawa-Potawatomi First Nations from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory in Canada currently studying medical physics at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario. She is also a mentor for Indigenous youth and a firm believer in the benefits of attending STEM camps.



Astronaut John Herrington (Chickasaw) speaks to children attending a weeklong space and aviation academy in Ada, Okla., Thursday, June 22, 2006. The fifth through eighth-grade youth spent one week learning about space, aviation and weather at the Chickasaw Nation's fourth-annual Aviation and Space Academy. (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki)

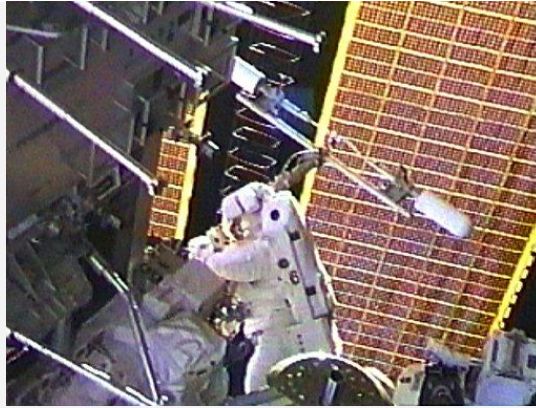
“Science camps are a really fun way to introduce kids to science and I hope the kids that go to Space Camp have a really positive experience and happy memories,” she told ICTM via email.

“Part of being successful is wanting a goal, the other part is working very hard to get there. I study a lot and am at school almost every day. It's also important to teach little ones that they have to give back and volunteer as soon as they are able. I volunteer all year doing science outreach in our community, tutoring native kids in science and math, mentoring high school students. For Native folks we have to do a lot of work as it is, the science community is very small so we have to work even harder to grow it. I'm very optimistic though, I think once Native folks get a taste for it they'll be converted and value it as I do.”

Here are some of the scholarships & tribal programs on offer for the U.S. Space & Rocket Center Space Camp.

The U.S. Space & Rocket Center Foundation has an annual [General Scholarship Program](#). Full scholarships cover tuition, room & board for any 6-day weeklong, individual camp programs and are good for one year. Transportation and incidentals are the responsibility of the scholarship recipient. All applicants must be attending 4th – 12th grade and may apply in one of four categories - Financial Need, Special Needs, Academic Achievement, or Leadership. Each applicant must answer two essay questions, design a mission patch, describe a science project using the scientific method, and provide three letters of recommendation. A selection committee reviews applications and scholarships are awarded based on available funding. 2016 Applications are now closed. Scholarship applications for 2017 will open in the Fall.

The [Chickasaw Nation Aviation and Space Academy](#) (CNASA) in operation since 2003, the Chickasaw Nation also assists its youth (both resident and at-large) with the opportunity to attend Space Camp. For more information, contact the office of supportive programs at (580) 272-5579 or STMPProgram@chickasaw.net.



Astronaut John Herrington (Chickasaw) works near the mobile transport cart after deploying the UHF radio antenna, over Herrington's head, during a televised spacewalk Saturday, Nov. 30, 2002. (AP Photo/NASA TV)

The Mars Generation is offering [10 full scholarships](#) to Space Camp. “Not every bright and talented student can afford to go to Space Camp; we'd like to send 10!” former NASA Astronaut and High School Teacher [Dorothy Metcalf-Lindenburger](#) aka [@AstroDot](#) announced via [Twitter](#). Metcalf-Lindenburger is a member of the Advisory Board for The Mars Generation. “A lot of kids aren't necessarily interested in science and math, but they do get excited about things like the Mars rovers, Spirit and Opportunity. I want to continue to build more connections with the community to get them jazzed about studying science,” she says on the MG website.

The [application process](#) has two parts: “the application process begins with the teachers who recognize talent and need. Teachers will nominate students who have demonstrated an aptitude in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) who would benefit from an experience like Space Camp. The Mars Generation board members will review nominations, and invite applications from qualified nominated students. Each application will include a two-page essay from the student. Deadline for teacher nominations is no later than Feb. 1, 2016, and student applications must be completed and submitted online on or before March 1, 2016.” To nominate a student for a scholarship teachers should go to: <http://themarsgeneration.org/space-camp-scholarship-nominations-form/>

The Northrup Grumman Foundation offers annual education grants for students and teachers for a variety of educational programs promoting space exploration, science, technology, engineering, and math including Space Camp. [Past recipients](#) have included the [Native American Community Academy](#) in Albuquerque, New Mexico and [Sacaton Middle School](#) in Sacaton, Arizona. For more information see the organization's [foundation page](#) and [grants guidelines](#). Please note that grants cannot be given to individuals.

For information on other tribal STEM scholarships and programs, check with your tribal office. Additionally, scholarships may be available from your local school district. (The defunct [Spencer Proffer Scholarship](#) offered 12 Proffer Family Explorer scholarships for full tuition and room & board to US Native American / Alaskan Native and Indigenous Canadian students aged 9-11 in 2012 in Partnership with Space Camp.)

See Related: Gravity Wins: [NDN Geek Reflects on Not Having the Right Stuff](#)

Join ICTMN's Native Nerds for Native Nerdy content, including movie reviews, technology reviews, comic book discussions and more, all from a Native perspective.

Make sure to use the Hashtag #NativeNerd
Follow ICTMN Correspondent (and proud Native Nerd) Lisa J. Ellwood on Twitter
at www.twitter.com/IconicImagery

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/24/scholarships-space-natives-all-ages-are-invited-space-camp-163175>

Schneider: Bill gives Meskwaki tribe criminal jurisdiction

state Sen. Charles Schneider 3:32 a.m. CST January 24, 2016



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(Photo: Rodney White/The Register)

It was a short week at the Capitol as we honored the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. The Legislative process has started, however, and subcommittees are being assigned for bills that have been introduced. If a majority of subcommittee members believe the legislation warrants further consideration, the bill will advance to the full committee for review. As the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, my job is to assign Republican committee members to serve on those subcommittees.

I have requested bills of my own based on input I've received from constituents the last several months. One of the bills relates to occupational licensure. The other would make changes to the civil asset forfeiture process. These are issues that have bipartisan appeal,

and I hope we can at least convene a subcommittee meeting to address these issues. The bills are still being drafted, but I will share details once they are filed.

On Wednesday we celebrated Veterans Day by honoring the courageous men and women who have served in our armed forces. It was a great opportunity to talk with many of our state's veterans and thank them for their service. Let this be a continuing reminder to thank our veterans for everything they do for Iowa and the United States of America.

I was a member of the subcommittee and led the debate for Senate Republicans on [SF 2022](#), which the Senate passed 41-6 this week. The bill effectively gives the Meskwaki tribe jurisdiction over certain crimes committed by tribe members against tribe members on the Meskwaki settlement.

In many states, Native American tribes have criminal jurisdiction for certain crimes committed by Native Americans against Native Americans on their own territory. This has not been the case in Iowa, however, due to a federal law enacted in 1948.

In 1948, Congress enacted a law granting Iowa, rather than the Meskwaki tribe, jurisdiction for criminal offenses occurring on Meskwaki territory, but retaining federal jurisdiction for offenses against federal law. At the time, the tribe did not have its own police force or court system. Since then, the tribe has hired its own police force. Its officers are trained at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. The tribe also has its own court system. Clearly, it is capable of enforcing its own criminal code. There no longer is a need for state jurisdiction.

Senate File 2022 rescinds state jurisdiction, leaving the Meskwaki with jurisdiction over offenses committed by tribe members against tribe members on settlement territory. The Federal Government still has jurisdiction for violations of federal law.

STATE SEN. CHARLES SCHNEIDER, R-West Des Moines, represents District 22, which includes portions of Clive, Waukee, West Des Moines and Windsor Heights. He can be reached at 281-3371 or charles.schneider@legis.iowa.gov.

Direct Link:

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/local/community/2016/01/24/charles-schneider-meskwaki/79260128/>

First Autonomous Indigenous Government in Peru Created

Rick Kearns

1/24/16

The Wampis people of Peru recently created the nation's first Autonomous Indigenous Government, which does not seek independence from Peru but intends to protect their rights and their territory.

On November 29, in the town of Soledad, the Wampis announced the formation of their autonomous government that brings together 100 Wampis communities, representing over 10,000 people that reside in the northern Amazonian part of Peru which extends across 3.2 million acres (roughly the size of the U.S. state of Connecticut).

The process that led to the formation of the new government took place over several years, with over 50 community meetings and 15 general assemblies according to Wampis officials. They were inspired to create the new government by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as Peruvian laws that acknowledged indigenous rights.

The motivation for the new government also grew out of frustration with how Wampis territory was being sold or given away, without their consent, to various businesses.

One of the Wampis leaders, Andres Noningo Sesen, explained some of their goals in a press statement released in December.

“We will still be Peruvian citizens but now we will have our own government responsible for our own territory. This will allow us to defend our forests from the threats of logging, mining, oil and gas and mega dams. As every year goes by these threats grow bigger,” Sesen stated.

One of the defense related examples given by Wampi leaders is their sustained resistance to gold mining operations in their territory by the Afrodita, S.A. Company which was finally ordered to suspend operations along the Cenpea and Maraño rivers. Both rivers suffered from severe mercury and cyanide stemming from mining activities in the area and indigenous resistance to the pollution is credited with forcing the suspension.

“This unity will bring us the political strength we need to explain our vision to the world and to the governments and companies who only see the gold and oil in our rivers and forests. For them, too often we are like a small insect who they want to squash. Any activity planned in our territory that will affect us will now have to be decided by our own government which represents all our communities,” Sessen said.

The Wampis communities started the process towards autonomy by passing a statute known as the [Statute of the Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation](#), in which they outlined their plans for the future including protection of religion, spirituality, education, language and the recovery of ancestral place names.

While Peruvian officials have not publicly acknowledged or commented on the formation of the Wampis Autonomous Indigenous Government, Wray Perez Ramirez, the new President of the Autonomous Territorial Government has expressed confidence in their effort.

“We trust that the Peruvian State will support our initiative. This will assist in the compliance of their obligations to respect the fundamental rights of the Indigenous Peoples to determine their own future,” Ramirez said.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/24/first-autonomous-indigenous-government-peru-created-163165>

Harnessing the Power of TV & the Pen: Native Journalist Patty Talahongva

Tanya H. Lee

1/25/16

Patty Talahongva, Hopi, is working with the community-development organization [Native American Connections](#) on restoring the historic music building at the Phoenix Indian School, a government-run boarding school that functioned from 1891 until 1990 to educate Navajo, Hopi, Apache and other children from Southwestern tribes.

She has highly personal reasons for being involved: not only did generations of her family attend the school, but it is where Talahongva got her start as a journalist. She talked with ICTMN about the school and her work, which has included print and broadcast news reporting and production, a stint as president of the [Native American Journalists Association](#), and now, independent work as a documentary filmmaker.

Related: [As Arizona's Native Students Struggle to Stay In School, Tribal Leaders Move To Help](#)

How did you start writing newspaper stories?

I was fortunate to be at boarding school at a time when the language wasn't suppressed, or the culture or even the religion. When my relatives went to the school, they were the ones who really suffered from the whole idea of taking away students' Indianness.

My counselor recognized something in me and said I should apply for a position with the *Phoenix Gazette*. The paper's *Teen Gazette*, which was published on Saturdays, was [written by students from] different high schools in Phoenix but they had never had a correspondent from Phoenix Indian School. “And they pay!” she said.

The entire city of Phoenix read our stories! For the correspondents who were good about turning in their stories on time, the *Gazette* would send out polls with questions for teenagers to answer about smoking or pregnancy, all kinds of things. If you were assigned a poll, you got bonus pay. I got a lot of polls because I turned in my stories on time and also because they wanted to hear the views of Native Americans.

How did you get into TV broadcasting?

In my senior year of high school I moved to Flagstaff to be near my family. I went to Flagstaff High School and totally lucked out because Flag had a TV station.

My classmate worked at the station and he encouraged me to apply for a job. I did surveys, calling different residents of Flagstaff to find out what programs they liked, just very basic work. But then they brought me into the news department and trained me to run big studio cameras. There were two cameras. If you were running camera one at the beginning of the newscast, you were in camera two's wide shot of the studio.

This was the only station that really covered northern Arizona, so everyone on the rez saw me. My grandfather was so excited and proud that I worked for the TV station that he told everyone, "Patty's on TV."

I ended up graduating from running the cameras and learned how to direct the newscast. When I was a senior in high school, I actually directed the 5 o'clock and 10 o'clock newscasts.

Did you pursue journalism in college?

I started at Northern Arizona University and for some reason I decided I wanted to be a lawyer.



Patty Talahongva finishing a half-marathon at Disney. (Courtesy Patty Talahongva)

So did you end up going to law school?

No. I kept working at the TV station and loving it. ... Then I transferred to Arizona State University and started working in the newsroom at Channel 10.

Were you the only Native American in the newsroom at that point?

In the whole city. There were no Natives in the news, not on air and not even behind the scenes.

And you were studying at ASU at the same time?

Back in those days the professors had no real-time experience in TV newsrooms. I could tell they didn't know what they were talking about. So being the very bright person that I was, I decided I didn't need college to do the work I was doing.

When I tell students my story I tell them I have not graduated from college and that it was a dumb choice. If you're young, stay in school, get it out of the way, because it doesn't take much—it takes commitment, but it's not something you can't achieve.

[Over the next several years, Talahongva worked at various Phoenix TV stations, took a year off to have a child, served as Miss Hopi for a year, and in 2000, struck out on her own.]

Why did you decide to become an independent journalist?

I got tired of not being able to get enough Native American news stories into the newscast.



Patty Talahongva at the beach in New Jersey. (Courtesy Patty Talahongva)

What projects have you been working on?

I started working in radio as a fill-in host for [Native America Calling](#), and I've gone back to print. I really enjoyed writing for magazines—*Native Peoples*, *Winds of Change*, *Smithsonian*, the NMAI magazine *American Indian*, *Architectural Digest*, *Arizona*

HighwaystheTribal College Journal. I also cover breaking news for CBS, stories like the freeway shootings in Phoenix last year and the Yarnell Hill Fire where 19 firefighters were killed in Prescott in 2013.

Former Sen. Byron Dorgan asked me to serve on the board of advisors for his organization, [Center for Native American Youth](#), in 2011, and I was a founding director of the [Hopi Education Endowment Fund](#), a position I held for 10 years.

I've also been working in production doing educational videos. I want to bring out the Native voice, to enlighten people about Native Americans in general.

What documentaries have you done?

There's a list on my [website](#). Right now I'm working on a piece about Lewis Tewanima, a Hopi man who competed in two Olympics and won the silver medal in the 10,000-meter in 1912.

I'm also raising funds for a documentary about the start of the smoke-free movement in this country. It started with my tribe, on my reservation, in Keams Canyon. The hospital there became the first smoke-free health facility in the world. The tribe realized, yes, tobacco is sacred to us. And we know that the white man's tobacco is not healthy because of the additives. With those two ideas in mind, they passed a smoke-free ordinance.

After Hopi went smoke-free, Phoenix Indian Medical Center followed. Then Indian Health Services and all the other government departments, like veterans affairs, and education. Hopi has a commendation from the World Health Organization for creating the very first smoke-free health environment.

What issues do you see as being the most urgent in Indian country?

When Sen. Dorgan asked me to join the board of the Center for Native American Youth, he said that their focus was on suicide prevention. I can't really begin to tell you how many relatives of mine have taken their lives and how it has affected me, how it's affected my family. I said yes immediately. We really tackle this issue and we talk about it more openly, which is key.

There are a lot of other issues that the youth have brought to us. Sexual abuse, and alcoholism is a big issue. It's the underlying factor in everything. Then on top of that you have domestic violence that they witness and they are also victims of.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/25/harnessing-power-tv-pen-native-journalist-patty-talahongva-163146>

'It has brought us to our knees': Small Okla. town reeling from suicide 'epidemic'

By [Sarah Kaplan](#) January 25

Police Chief Jason Smith's heart broke when he learned about the suicide of Jaidon DuBois. Friends and family described the 16-year-old as thoughtful, good-looking and earnest. He was the kind of kid who doled out hugs to everyone he came across, whose presence lit up rooms.

Smith's heart broke again weeks later, when a 21-year-old from his small town of Anadarko, Okla., shot and killed himself. And again, not long after that, when a local 22-year-old did the same.

But when an 11-year-old committed suicide last week, the fourth person from Anadarko to kill him or herself in less than two months, it didn't break Smith's heart. It strengthened his resolve.

Smith took to [Facebook](#) with a desperate plea for young people in his town:

"I'm unsure and left at a loss [to] articulate words in this fourth case worked in the past few weeks," he wrote, "But believe that as a community we can make a difference. If you are reading this post and you have thoughts of suicide please understand YOUR LIFE MATTERS!"

"Not talking about the last three didn't prevent the fourth one," Smith told [KOTV](#).

He had to do something, Smith said in separate interview with [KFOR](#). The suicides were devastating his town. "It has brought us to our knees," he said.

It's not clear what might be behind the rash of suicides in [Anadarko](#), a town of about 6,700 people that's about an hour's drive from Oklahoma City. It's a modest but proud place with a large Native American community. Many residents are farmers or work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs or various tribal offices. The town, named for the Nadaco tribe that lived there, [calls itself](#) the "Indian Capital of the Nation."

So far, the suicides — all of which involved guns — are just four data points on a chart with no discernible trend. The victims attended different schools or had completed school. DuBois' father Jamie told [KOTV](#) that the 16-year-old suffered from depression and had been taking medication for his mental illness. The other three victims have not yet been named.

It's not clear that the incidents are connected at all, except by the fact that "they've been violent and they've really shook the community to the core," Smith told [KOTV](#).

But something broader does seem to be at work. The national rate of suicide in 2014 was about 13 deaths per 100,000 people, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Anadarko, the rate has been four times that over the course of just seven weeks.

Smith told [KFOR](#) that police are investigating possible causes of the suicides, including looking into whether bullying was a factor.

"If we could put it under a category, like bullying, we'd put our resources toward addressing bullying," Smith told the [Lawton, Okla. Constitution](#). "That's the problem right now. There are so many causes. Suicide is a feeling of helplessness and that there's nothing you feel you can do about it."

Meanwhile, residents of Anadarko are grappling with the gaping loss.

"I knew every single one of them. I taught every single one of them or I was their principal and all of them are loved and they didn't have to choose the course," Lynn Bellamy, a longtime school teacher in Anadarko who is now pastor at the town's First Baptist Church, told [KFOR](#).

First Baptist is handling the funeral arrangements for the latest victim, an 11-year-old boy.

On Wednesday, as news of his suicide spread through town, a group of people gathered outside Anadarko High School holding signs against suicide.

"You're alive for a reason. Don't ever give up," one read, according to the [Lawton Constitution](#). "We care. You are strong," read another.

Without an obvious link between the four deaths, city officials have no clear path to preventing more. Some fear that publicizing the deaths may make other teenagers and young adults at risk more likely to kill themselves.

Donnie Edmondson, pastor of Virginia Avenue Baptist Church, told the [Lawton Constitution](#) that he worried that a "spirit of suicide" had taken hold of the town, a concern echoed by Smith.

"Someone's initials are on a bracelet that's passed around and someone sees that and feels that's how they can be recognized," he told the Oklahoma paper. "That's not the right way."

Research shows that adolescents are most susceptible to “[suicide contagion](#)” when one suicide is followed by a series of several others in an unusually short time frame. Last month, [the Atlantic](#) published a report on Silicon Valley high schools that have been plagued by clusters of suicide — the 10-year suicide rate at the schools is four to five times the national average. Closer to Washington, Fairfax County’s W.T. Woodson High School recently saw a spate of six suicides over the course of just three years.

It’s not that one suicide suddenly gives others the same idea, according to a [CDC report on suicide contagion](#). But news that someone has taken their own life — especially if it appears they did so as a way of “coping” with hardship — may persuade other, already vulnerable people to do the same.

“Slowly, people just kept breaking down,” Bailey Bishop, a senior at W.T. Woodson, told [The Washington Post](#) in 2014.

Native American teenagers commit suicide at a rate much higher than the national average, according to the [CDC](#). A poisonous tangle of problems — poverty, unemployment, alcoholism, domestic violence, the devastating toll of history — that often persist in Native communities, coupled with an often-dire lack of mental health resources, leaves them [even more vulnerable](#) than the average teenager.

It’s not clear how many of the victims in Anadarko were Native American. According to [Census data](#), roughly 48 percent of residents identify as American Indian or Alaska Native. The town is home to a [Bureau of Indian Affairs office](#) that serves members of seven federally recognized tribes living in the area.

Bellamy, the pastor at First Baptist Church in Anadarko, said he wants to convey that suicide isn’t a coping mechanism or solution to life’s problems — it’s only a source of more pain.

“They see it as an option and it’s not an option. It’s the end. It’s final. All that’s left is the hurt and suffering of the family and friends,” he told [KFOR](#).

Edmondson and other local church leaders are organizing an outreach event for next Sunday for people affected by the tragedies — which, in this close-knit community, is basically everyone. The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health has set up a “care station” at the local hospital for people who need assistance themselves. The city manager is also looking into obtaining suicide prevention courses for the high school.

And all around town, urgent fliers flap in the winter breeze.

“When it seems like there’s no hope, there is help,” one reads, offering the number for the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#). “Honor your life.”

Correction: Initial reports on the most recent suicide in Anadarko incorrectly identified the victim as a girl. He was an 11-year-old boy.

Direct Link: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/01/25/it-has-brought-us-to-our-knees-small-okla-town-reeling-from-suicide-epidemic/>

It is beyond time for Britain to apologise to Australia's Indigenous people



Paul Daley

Today is an annual festival of barbecues and slabs, and fetishisation of a flag that, with its Union Jack, symbolises violence and oppression to Indigenous people

Monday 25 January 2016 20.30 GMT Last modified on Tuesday 26 January 2016 09.58 GMT

Every year Australia Day gets bigger, more ostentatious and increasingly imbued with a brazen “kiss the flag”, “love us or leave us” territorial ugliness that eclipses a discomfiting truth at the heart of our nationhood.

And that is: for the vast majority of Australians, this is someone else’s land. Always was. Always will be.

It’s inarguable.

Federal parliament might be toying with “recognising” Indigenous people in the constitution. But until that is matched by a broad apology for the violence and dispossession that accompanied British invasion and occupation, a genuine conversation about treaties with first Australians, and a formal acknowledgement of sovereignty and the need for reparations, such symbolism will remain just that – symbolic.

As non-Indigenous Australia parties with itself again today, a good place to start in terms of conciliation would be an apology from both Great Britain and Australia to this

continent's first peoples. What for? For at least a century and a half of extreme violence and continued dispossession that followed invasion, and the British-inspired wars and mass murders across the continent from the first east coast contact in 1770 to the [Coniston massacre](#) in 1928 and beyond.

There are [precedents](#). Former British prime minister Tony Blair gave what many regarded as an apology for Britain's role in the 19th century Irish potato famine; he later expressed profound regret (though not an abject apology) for Britain's involvement in slavery.

Meanwhile in 1995 Queen Elizabeth apologised to New Zealand's biggest Maori tribe for Britain's devastation of its lands.

It is beyond time for Britain to apologise to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The journals and letters of the British – from the first explorers and colonial governors to the soldiers and so-called “settlers” – who arrived from 1770 to [massacre tens upon tens of thousands](#) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and steal their land, make unambiguously clear what happened.

Generations of Australian public intellectuals have wrestled with this shameful past. We've had the so-called “history wars” polarised between the alleged “black armband” of historical truth-telling and the “white blindfold” of adherence to some absurd notion of benign British settlement. There has been nothing resembling a national reckoning.

Former prime minister Paul Keating came closest to kick starting one with his 1992 [Redfern speech](#):

... the starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians,” he said.

It begins, I think, with that act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the diseases. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts

and minds. We failed to ask - how would I feel if this were done to me? As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded all of us.

Tony Abbott, who promised to be a prime minister for Indigenous affairs, referenced Keating's speech in parliament, [speaking of a "stain"](#) on Australia's soul. And then he behaved like the paternalistic, top-down mission manager of old, conducted a cynical annual PR roadshow to a remote Indigenous community, gathered about him a self interested and blinkered cabal of Indigenous advisers and made the absurd assertion the "Great Southern Land" was "unsettled or, um, scarcely settled" before the invasion of Arthur Phillip's First Fleet on 26 January, 1788.

That event, of course, is now marked with our annual festival of barbecues and slabs, and fetishisation of a flag that, with its Union Jack, symbolises violence and oppression to Indigenous people.

Such is the indulgence of colonial privilege.

John Howard was worse than Abbott, refusing to countenance any sort of apology because, amid all the contested past of the history wars, he thought it unnecessary for today's Australians to feel guilt for colonialism's back catalogue.

Malcolm Turnbull shows little early promise that Indigenous issues will be a priority.

In 2008 [Kevin Rudd delivered](#) what was broadly termed "the apology". Rhetorically and legally specific, it related to the stolen generation, whose experience of being forcibly removed from parents was but one of the many terrible legacies of British invasion with its extreme violence and self-justifying social Darwinism.

Politics in Australia has largely failed the truth regarding British occupation of Australia. Perhaps mindful of potential compensation implications, consecutive recent prime ministers haven't leveled on anything resembling the extent of the violence against Indigenous Australia and all of its dehumanising generational, social and economic reverberations.

On 30 July 1768, just before he set sail on the Endeavour in search of the "Great Southern Land", Lieutenant James Cook received secret orders from the British Admiralty.

Cook's journal and the instructions (respectively manuscripts numbers 1 and 2 at the National Library of Australia, which serves [a primary role](#) in this nation's memory) [told the commander](#) he should scour the shores for the "Products thereof" – the mammals, birds and fish, any potentially valuable minerals and decent, organic foods.

And he was "to observe the Genius, Temper, Disposition and Number of the Natives, if there be any and endeavour by all proper means to cultivate a Friendship and Alliance with them ... inviting them to Traffick, and Shewing them every kind of Civility and Regard."

"You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take Possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain: Or: if you find the Country uninhabited take Possession for his Majesty by setting up Proper Marks and Inscriptions."

Friendship and alliance? Civility and regard? Consent to take the land?

In Botany Bay in 1770, Cook immediately clashed with the Gweagal tribesmen, shooting at least one. He made his claims on the east coast before Phillip landed on 26 January, 1788.

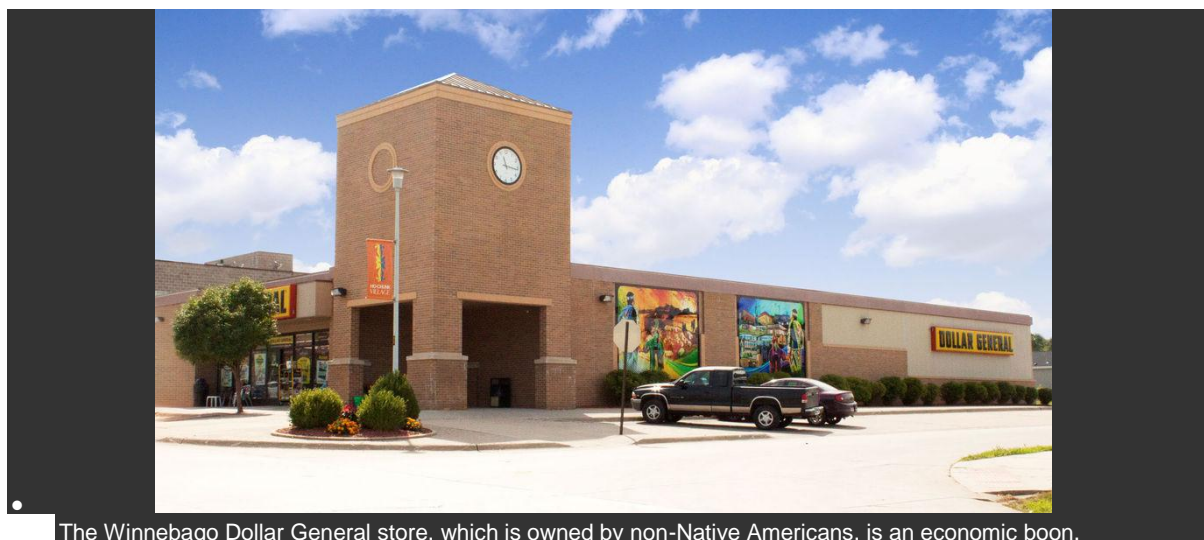
Did Cook seek consent for Britain to take the land?

Did any blackfella say, "Sure, Lieutenant – Britain can have the lot"?

Think about that this Australia Day.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/26/it-is-beyond-time-for-britain-to-apologise-to-australias-indigenous-people>

Tax breaks for businesses owned by non-Native Americans would tackle poverty on reservations



The Winnebago Dollar General store, which is owned by non-Native Americans, is an economic boon.

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By Emily Nohr / World-Herald Bureau

LINCOLN — A Dollar General store that opened a decade ago in Winnebago ushered in a new era of business on the northeast Nebraska reservation.

Before the store opened, no business owned by a non-Native American had located there in some 30 years, said businessman Lance Morgan, who leads the tribe's economic development arm. Some such businesses had left the reservation for economic reasons. Others went because of confusion over taxes.

"Even now," he said, "there's a daily confusion on tax."

That issue could be addressed under a bill proposed last week in the State Legislature by a state senator whose district includes three tribes.

Legislative Bill 1104, introduced by O'Neill State Sen. Tyson Larson, would offer tax breaks to new and expanding businesses in economic impact zones on reservations. The goal is to help spur new investment and create jobs in pockets with historically high poverty and unemployment, Larson said.

The unemployment rate on the Omaha reservation is 69 percent, for example, compared with the statewide rate of 2.5 percent.

"This isn't the silver bullet, but it will offer economic growth," Larson said. "It will offer economic certainty for business. And I think it will be a massive benefit not only to the tribes, but also the State of Nebraska, in the end."

Nebraska's recognized tribes are: the Santee Sioux, Winnebago and Omaha. A fourth, the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, is headquartered in the state, but doesn't have a reservation.

Such economic zones could be created on tribal lands held in trust, too. The Ponca Tribe has trusted land across the state, including in Douglas and Lancaster Counties. Representatives of at least two Nebraska tribes, as well as the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, say they're optimistic about the proposal.

Under the measure, no business located within an economic impact zone would pay state income taxes. Businesses owned by non-Native Americans would also be exempt from paying the first \$10 million of sales tax on goods bought and delivered into the zone.

Native American-owned businesses already are exempt from such taxes.

Businesses not owned by a Native American currently have the potential, Larson said, to be double taxed — by the state and by the tribe.

While he's unaware of any businesses seeking out reservations, he thinks the bill could have an "if you build it, they will come" effect.

Among other features of Larson's bill:

- » The tribe could replace the state sales tax with a tribal tax that would be equal to or less than the state's 5.5 percent rate. All Dollar General customers would then pay a tribal tax, with 80 percent of it going back to the tribe and 20 percent to the state. Currently tribal members don't pay state sales tax at the store, but non-Native Americans do.

- » It would shift a portion of a state community college's levy back to tribal community colleges. A portion of property taxes collected on taxable reservation land would be split between the Nebraska Indian Community College and Little Priest Tribal College. The tribal colleges would get 15 percent of the state community college levy.

Morgan said the current arrangement — with sales tax paid solely by non-Native Americans — doesn't make sense in today's society.

"To figure out what to pay, based on race, is offensive, especially in our own community," he said.

Morgan said he's cautiously optimistic about the proposal, while Vernon Miller, chairman of the Omaha Tribe, said he likes the bill's intent.

The Omaha Tribe may take an official position on Larson's proposal after a Tribal Council meeting today, he said.

"I'm happy there's a dialogue happening," Miller said.

Judi gaiashkibos, executive director of the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, said tribes have made strides in development in recent years.

Ho-Chunk, the economic development corporation owned by the Winnebago, operates a number of subsidiaries in industries such as real estate, human resources and construction and modular homes, among others.

The Santee Sioux, meanwhile, are developing an 18-hole golf course near their Ohiya Casino Resort, which opened in 2013.

But gaiashkibos said she believes the bill could address persistent challenges the tribes face and provide tribal members with opportunities.

"It's important for the (legislative) body to remember they represent us," she said.

"We're optimistic this could be beneficial for our tribes and raise awareness of the sovereign tribes in our state."

It's highly likely that the State-Tribal Relations Committee will prioritize the measure, though committee members are still seeking feedback from the tribes, said State Sen. Brett Lindstrom of Omaha, chairman of the committee.

Direct Link: http://www.omaha.com/news/legislature/tax-breaks-for-businesses-owned-by-non-native-americans-would/article_948458da-9e1e-5a74-942f-e50541a4f224.html

A Right to the Land: Native Americans and Militias in Oregon and Nevada

01/25/2016 05:34 pm ET | Updated 22 hours ago

- [A. B. Wilkinson](#) Assistant Professor of History, University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV)



Neglected cattle on BLM lands and Indigenous petroglyphs at Mah'ha-gah-doo (Gold Butte)

Photos taken by Fawn Douglas, Jan. 16, 2016

Battles over land, resources, and who has a right to them are central to the history of the United States. Today, this type of conflict continues with the armed occupation of federal buildings in Oregon, led by members of the Bundy family who organized a similar protest two years ago in Nevada.

The militia in Oregon has brought media attention and debate about how the U.S. government should respond. Somewhat perplexed, Native Americans and others are asking the question: why have authorities been so slow to react in Oregon and when will those who are breaking the law be prosecuted for doing the same in Nevada?

Though the Bundy militias have made a series of [confusing comments](#) over the years, their main goal has been to eradicate U.S. government oversight of public lands. In short, they want to eliminate federal lands, including national parks, so it can become private property.

At the same time, Native Americans continue to fight for their sacred lands and are joining with allies from various interest groups to protect the environment in the same areas the Bundy militia is attempting to privatize. The Burns band of Northern Paiute have been working to secure their traditional sites in Harney County, Oregon, just as

people from the Moapa and Las Vegas bands of Southern Paiute have been working to conserve *Mah'ha-gah-doo* (Gold Butte) in Clark County, Nevada.

While they don't always grab the headlines, Indigenous struggles to protect their lands show that colonialism has not ended in the 21st century.

"If you think the Indian wars are over, then think again"

If anyone has the right to demand that the U.S. government hand back federal lands to the people it's Native Americans. For hundreds of years, the federal government has stripped territory from Indigenous tribes who have continually fought to regain their lands as sovereign nations.

One of these many stories is that of two sisters, [Carrie and Mary Dann](#), and other Western Shoshone in Nevada. Since the early 1970s, they fought the U.S. government to maintain their right to graze horses and cattle on lands held by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Even though [Western Shoshone territory](#) was protected in the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley, this did not stop the federal government from a massive land grab of 24 million acres in parts of Nevada and surrounding states. Nor did it stop the U.S. from building a nuclear bombing facility on these lands in 1951. Since then, 928 nuclear tests have been conducted at the site, which have contaminated and desecrated the land.

In 1979, courts awarded the Western Shoshone \$26 million for [territory taken](#) by the U.S. government, but the tribe refused to take the money at the time. Instead they wanted their lands returned -- something the U.S. rarely does even after courts rule that lands were taken illegally.

Even though the Western Shoshone legally proved their lands belonged to them, the government denied the Dann sisters and others the right to graze livestock on their ancestral territory. In the 1990s and 2000s, the BLM confiscated their livestock and began to sell the animals to pay \$3 million in trespassing fines they received over the years.

Afterwards, [Carrie Dann](#) said, "I was indigenous and in one single evening they made me indigent. If you think the Indian wars are over, then think again."

In 2006, the United Nations' [Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) found that the Western Shoshone were "being denied their traditional rights to land." The U.N. found that the U.S. government harassed and intimidated Western Shoshone people "through the imposition of grazing fees, trespass and collection notices, impounding of horse and livestock, restrictions on hunting, fishing, and gathering, as well as arrests, which gravely disturb the enjoyment of their ancestral lands."

For decades, rancher Cliven Bundy similarly refused to follow laws that prohibit cattle grazing on public lands in Nevada. This led to an armed standoff between his militia and federal law enforcement in 2014, where the federal government eventually retreated and has not returned since.

So why is it that the U.S. government acted so differently with the Western Shoshone when compared to the Bundy family?

Reclaiming the Land from Domestic Terrorists

A few weeks ago the two sons of rancher Clive Bundy, Ammon and Ryan, along with a militia of around 20 people took over several remote federal buildings at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Harney County, Oregon. Though the [motives](#) of the armed protestors have not always been clear, one of the things they're calling for are commuted prison sentences for ranchers Steven Hammond and his father Dwight.

Federal courts found the Hammonds [guilty of arson](#) for fires that affected both the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and other federally protected areas in eastern Oregon. In 2001, Steven Hammond and his hunting party intentionally started fires to cover up deer poaching on public lands. After handing out matches, Hammond told his crew they were going to "light up the whole country on fire," but later lied to federal authorities on the cause of the fire.

After a decade, a federal court sentenced the Hammonds to the minimum five years in prison, where they are now serving out their time. While the Hammonds may not agree with their punishment, they [do not support](#) the current militia occupation in Oregon.

Still, Ammon Bundy [complains](#) that the U.S. government has been expanding wildlife refuges "at the expense of the ranchers and miners." He hopes the [ranchers](#) "will come back and reclaim their land, and the wildlife refuge will be shut down forever and the federal government will relinquish such control."

Ironically, the wildlife refuge and surrounding area are the [ancestral homelands](#) of the Northern Paiute. Lost in most reporting is the fact that the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge was once part of 1.78 million acres of the Malheur Indian Reservation, which was taken from the Northern Paiute in violation of an unratified treaty from 1868.

Over a hundred years ago, when the U.S. government and ranchers were on the same side, they fraudulently confiscated these Indigenous lands. They treated the Northern Paiute much like the Western Shoshone and hundreds of other tribes across the country, forcing them onto American Indian reservations on small portions of refuse land. The [Burns Paiute today](#) have a reservation of only 760 acres.

The Bundy militias are not concerned with the land claims of Indigenous peoples. Ryan Bundy [stated](#) that they want to "restore the rights to people so they can use the land and resources," in reference to privatization of public lands for logging, mining, and ranching.

While these militias wrap their rhetoric around fighting for the "people," they are driven by a rugged individualism that seeks to profit from exploiting the land's natural resources without federal regulation.

"We also recognize that the Native Americans had the claim to the land," [said](#) Bundy, "but they lost that claim." He continued: "There are things to learn from cultures of the past, but the current culture is the most important."

It's clear that these militia members do not include Native Americans as part of the "people" whose grievances equally matter. Instead, on the Oregon militia's website, they [compare](#) themselves to U.S. Revolutionary members who protected colonists from "Indian attacks" and threats from the "savages." This language is replicated from the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

In short, these militia occupations are the same colonial histories of the United States remixed in the 21st century.

The Fight to Protect Gold Butte (Mah'ha-gah-doo)

Today the Burns Paiute and other Indigenous nations are working with the U.S. government to preserve their lands, which is why around 4,000 artifacts of the Northern Paiute are located at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. These artifacts are currently held hostage by the militia occupation, but support has come in from various groups across the nation, including First Nations peoples in Canada, ranchers who respect Indigenous rights, and other groups across the country.

Many Native American tribes are also standing with the Burns Paiute. Members from bands of the Southern Paiute have recently held actions in solidarity with what's going on in Oregon. "We're supporting the Burns Paiute in any way we can," says organizer and Las Vegas Paiute member Fawn Douglas.

Currently, members of the Moapa and Las Vegas Paiute are working with environmental groups in southern Nevada to bring needed protection to the area of [Gold Butte](#) -- a historical site that has also been threatened by Bundy militias in Clark County, Nevada. Known to the Southern Paiute as Mah'ha-gah-doo, Gold Butte contains endangered wildlife, Native American artifacts, and ancient petroglyphs.

Since the 2014 Bundy occupation, large swaths of Gold Butte have remained [apseudo-militarized zone](#), where emaciated cattle illegally roam freely and militia threaten federal employees. Just last summer, the BLM ordered all of its workers out of the area after unknown assailants used gunfire to intimidate surveyors. The BLM hasn't returned since.

Without protection, Gold Butte is left vulnerable to vandalism, unregulated tourism, and invasive cattle grazing. This is why the [Sierra Club](#), [Battle Born Progress](#), [Friends of Nevada Wilderness](#), and [Friends of Gold Butte](#) have been working with members of the

Moapa and Las Vegas Paiute to preserve 350,000 acres as a national monument or national conservation area.

These groups have come together for rallies and service trips where they clean up trash at the site. In this way, various communities have joined together to protect the natural beauty and sacred space of Mah'ha-gah-doo for environmental, recreational, and cultural reasons.

"These sites are sacred to us," says William Anderson of the Moapa band of Southern Paiute, "that's part of our history, part of our culture. That's who we are."

"The same battles that my ancestors had"

The federal government's retreat in Nevada and silence in Oregon allow the Bundy's [misguided agenda](#) to continue to embolden others. If the U.S. government refuses to stop these threats then it once again fails to uphold treaties and disrespects the national sovereignty of Native Americans.

Concerning the occupation in Oregon, certain Burns Paiute council members are wondering when the U.S. government is going to show up to handle the situation. When asked why he thought the U.S. response to the Bundy militia was different than how his people had been treated in times past, council member [Jarvis Kennedy](#) didn't hesitate to answer: "Because they're white. That's about it."

Kennedy also said that if his tribe acted like the Bundy militia they'd already be in jail or worse. "It gets tiring," says Kennedy, "It's the same battles that my ancestors had and now it's just a bunch of different cavalry wearing a bunch of different coats."

Considering the facts over U.S. history, it's hard to disagree.

If you would like to support making Gold Butte (Mah'ha-gah-doo) a national monument in Nevada, please [add your name](#) to the petition.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/a-b-wilkinson/gold-butte_b_9044222.html

A Rarely Explored Branch Of Classical Music's Tree: Native American Music

By [NATHAN CONE](#) · 16 HOURS AGO

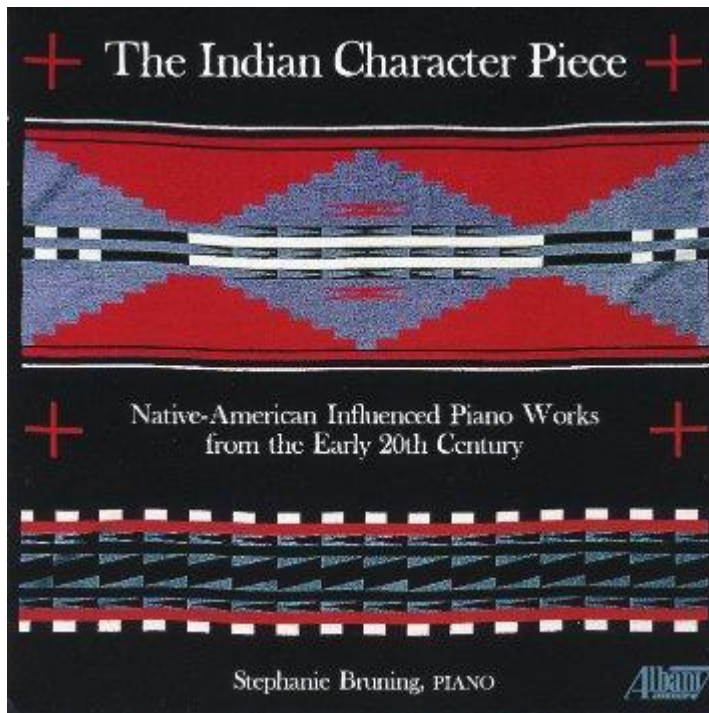
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SIMON A. EUGSTER / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Classical music has borrowed from folk melodies for centuries, but when it comes to American heritage, you're more likely to find music based on blues, jazz, or rural Appalachia than the original sounds of the continent—songs and melodies of Native Americans. Two new albums approach Native American sounds from different angles, and both are worth examination.

Around the two decades on either side of the year 1900, it was fashionable for the arts to record the lives of Native Americans. Some of the earliest films in existence document Native American life. As the frontier dwindled away and Native Americans were shuttled off to reservations, there was a burst of creative activity meant to document the lives of Native Americans. As pianist and scholar Stephanie Bruning observes in her well-written liner notes to her new compact disc, [*The Indian Character Piece*](#), the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago provided a major opportunity for composers to see and hear Native melodies. Antonin Dvořák attended that exposition, and shortly thereafter published his "New World Symphony," which draws in part on Native American music and African-American spirituals.



CREDIT ALBANY RECORDS

The solo piano music on *The Indian Character Piece* dates from post-1900, and mostly from American composers such as Charles Wakefield Cadman, Amy Beach, and Arthur Farwell, though the Italian composer Ferruccio Busoni was also entranced by Indian melodies, writing an “Indian Fantasy” for piano and orchestra, and a set of solo piano pieces included on this disc. Most of the music on the album sounds rather like salon music of the early late 19th century, albeit with some emphasis on pentatonic scales. None of it could hardly be called representative of true Native American music, even if concert-goers of the early 1900s may have been led to believe as much.

Flutist James J. Pellerite had already retired from his career as a traditional flutist when he discovered the Native American flute. He fell in love with the instrument, but with its limited range, Pellerite took it upon himself to develop new ways of playing the flute, such as covering the finger holes halfway or using non-traditional breath techniques while playing the instrument. [Mystic Voices Soaring](#) features seven recent works for Native American flute and either voice or strings. The album opens with the dense vocal number “Medicine Wheel,” but

becomes more accessible with each successive work. “Nature Story,” by John Heins, is an intriguing blend of flute, viola and cello, and later on the album, “Wind Songs,” by Marilyn Bliss, is a haunting evocation of the life-giving Wind of the prairie. Another standout track is “[Mystic Cadenzas](#),” a terrific showcase for Pellerite’s flute technique.

The music on both these albums is a relatively unexamined branch of the classical music tree. Each makes for a beautiful expansion of your listening repertoire.

Direct Link: <http://tpr.org/post/rarely-explored-branch-classical-musics-tree-native-american-music#stream/0>

‘Native American’ Church Sues the Feds to Get Its Pot Back

A Utah church is suing the feds for seizing marijuana it mailed to a cancer patient, citing protections afforded by its Indian spirituality. But activists call the church a mockery.

01.26.16 10:01 PM ET

An Oklevueha Native American Church medicine woman from Oregon mailed a five-ounce package of pot—the sacrament of cannabis—to an ailing church member in Ohio on Dec. 10, 2015.

The package never made it. It was seized by law enforcement, as Joy Graves discovered when she used UPS’s online tracking option to track her package. Graves and the church, founded by James “Flaming Eagle” Mooney, turned around and sued for the company and the federal government for their weed and the right to ship it wherever they please, citing federal religious freedom laws as the basis.

Mooney, who claims Native American ancestry but is not a member of a federally recognized tribe, told The Daily Beast by phone Tuesday that he believes the unnamed recipient, who suffers from esophageal cancer, got the “medicine” anyway. The church sent it to her “through a different route,” he said.

“All I know is that Joy is extremely dedicated to her medicine, and we will continue to support her with everything we have,” Mooney said of the medicine woman. “We will go to the wall for her because she is so pure in her intent to serve her fellow human beings.”

Graves’s dedication to the sacrament of cannabis is apparent on Facebook. The petite woman poses with marijuana plants that tower over her, with joints, and other drug paraphernalia. In several photos, she appears to be dressed like a cannabis plant.

“It sure is Frustrating to me to hear people utter that somehow we have ‘Won’ our battle for Cannabis Liberation, especially from those in states who have Laxed it enough for THEM to use Mother's Medicine while the masses upon the land still suffer because they can’t and too, because they try...THAT ladies and gentlemen is NOT true Justice nor ‘Victory,’” she [wrote](#) on Jan. 25. “TRUE Liberation such as this Creator given Plant Deserves, means it is viewed no Differently than any Other plant, vine, bush, tree, or whatever Else you wish to compare it to.”

The Oklevueha Native American Church, based out of Utah, claims in its complaint that it boasts “thousands of members in the United States, Canada, Mexico, South America, and Africa.” And membership is easy: a one-time payment of \$200 and reading the group’s code of ethics. Veterans and active duty servicemembers get a 90 percent discount, and they can get their own membership card for just \$20.

The church’s complaint says medicine men have used peyote and other naturally occurring substances as medicine for centuries. It also says it’s now affiliated with Mexico’s Huichol tribe.

“The sacramental cannabis included in the package was in-part sent for healing purposes as part of the church’s healing sacraments for a woman suffering from esophageal cancer,” the plaintiffs claimed in their complaint. “Each day the sacrament is delayed, the

healing process provided through the church is denied to its member suffering from esophageal cancer as well as is denied for other of church's spiritual healing practices."

They recruited Matthew Pappas, an attorney perhaps [best known](#) for once alleging that on-duty police officers consumed marijuana edibles during a dispensary raid.

The church claims relief not only under RFRA and RLUIPA, but also under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act—designed specifically to protect and preserve "the traditional religious rights and cultural practices of American Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts, and Native Hawaiians."

Mooney and his ilk have been on the radar of Native activists for years, one of whom called their actions "spiritual redface."

"When non-Natives steal ceremonies from us, it creates a spiritual harm," Ruth Hopkins[wrote](#) in the Indian Country Media Network in December. "These sacred rites have real power, and that's not to be taken lightly."

Hopkins lives in North Dakota, where she's a chief judge for the Spirit Lake Tribe. She told The Daily Beast that her investigation of Mooney's church turned up a number of red flags.

"It's kind of an ongoing concern for me, as far as cultural theft and people appropriating Native culture," she said. An open invitation to join the church, like the one she saw on Mooney's site, isn't common for Native religions, she said.

"What they're trying to do is use the law meant to protect Native American ceremonies...to traffic marijuana and grow it," Hopkins said.

The lawsuit alarms her not only because it gives Native spirituality a bad name but because, she fears, it could go all the way to the Supreme Court—which might use it to strike down one of the prized laws that protect authentic Native religious practices.

But the debate about whether Mooney and his adherents count as a Native American church raises larger questions about the government's role in defining religion.

Particularly when a religious tradition doesn't have a defined ultimate authority, deciding what counts, and what does not, may not be a responsibility the government wants.

Sergio Sandoval, a paralegal and investigator for Pappas, said Mooney views his beliefs “in a completely different way” from some other practitioners of Native American religions. “Traditionally, native churches are very exclusive. He thinks it should be more of where your thought process is at, not your lineage,” Sandoval said. “...If you’re Buddhist, you don’t have to be Chinese.”

He said he even joined Mooney’s church himself, paying the full price of admission. “The idea behind it is that the church partners with other religions. It’s not exclusive, it’s not saying that you have to believe this,” Sandoval said. “Marijuana is one of those sacrament things that deals with the mind, it deals with the body.”

“We don’t deny anybody, we don’t care what ideology they carry,” Mooney told The Daily Beast. “Our medicine people are instructed to respect all walks of life, as long as they abide by the code of ethics.”

And he is a true believer, at least in the healing power of cannabis. Mooney told The Daily Beast he “absolutely” believes that it can sustain and prolong life, even to the point of curing cancer. “I mean, that’s proven every which way you can possibly read,” Mooney said. “All you have to [do is] Google.”

With one major religious freedom victory—a Peyote use case in Utah—under its belt, there may be no stopping the Oklevueha Native American Church. And Mooney’s relentless in pushing back against claims of appropriation and misrepresentation of Native traditions by federally recognized tribes.

“What they’ve done is convinced the public that you have to be a federally recognized Indian with a certain amount of blood quantum to practice religion,” he said. “It’s like telling a Catholic that you had to be born in Italy.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/01/27/native-american-church-sues-the-feds-to-get-its-pot-back.html>

Stop romanticizing Arctic development, say indigenous leaders

Eilís Quinn | Eye on the Arctic January 27, 2016



Contractors walk around the site of a new ASRC Energy Services North Slope Maintenance Facility in Deadhorse on Thursday, May 21, 2015. At an Arctic conference in Norway this week, indigenous leaders called for economic development that includes them as full partners. *Loren Holmes / ADN*

TROMSO, Norway -- Indigenous communities around the North are struggling economically and want development more than ever, as long as it's done on their terms and with their full partnership.

That was the message sent by a host of Arctic indigenous leaders from the worlds of politics and business when they addressed the opening policy session of the Arctic Frontiers conference in Tromso, Norway on Monday.

Aili Keskitalo, president of the Sami Parliament of Norway, the body that represents indigenous reindeer herders, said it's hard to overstate the challenges climate change is putting on northern communities, which includes external business and political pressures competing for land and resources.

"History has shown us it is not enough to trust others," Keskitalo said. "Indigenous peoples all have stories to tell about historical blunders carried out in the name of modern economy and development."

Unfortunately, many of these "blunders" continue on today.

The installation of renewable energy like wind turbine farms is wreaking havoc across Sapmi, the traditional Saami homeland that stretches from Arctic Norway through Sweden and Finland and into northwestern Russia.

In Sweden and in Norway these windfarms have destroyed traditional reindeer grazing lands and caused mental and financial issues for the Saami that rely on the animals to make a living.

Even today, companies like Fred. Olsen Renewables are planning 72 wind turbines in important grazing and calving lands for the Norwegian reindeer herding districts of Åarjel-Njaarke and Voengelh Njaarke. Despite Saami opposition, the project has been approved by authorities.

“I call for responsible leadership from political authorities and from the industrial (actors) in the North,” Keskitalo said at the conference. “The indigenous peoples are ready to join to find viable solutions for climate, energy and resources. It is imperative however, that we are seen as part of the solution and not part of the problem.”

“Far too often when we talk about climate change in the Arctic, no mention is made of the peoples of the Arctic,” Vittus Qujaukitsoq, Greenland’s minister for Finance, Mineral Resources and Foreign Affairs, said on Monday. “The human dimension is all too often neglected as if the Arctic were a wild life sanctuary without human inhabitants.”

Changing the way political, industry and environmental leaders talk about the Arctic is the first step, indigenous leaders say.

“The Arctic is so much more than icebergs, ice sheets and animals used as a symbol for western conservation movements,” said Vittus Qujaukitsoq, Greenland’s minister for Finance, Mineral Resources and Foreign Affairs. “The Arctic is inhabited by people who have lived there for thousands of years.”

This idea that the Arctic is an empty place has allowed southerners to continue to project their values and aspirations on the region.

This needs to be corrected, Qujaukitsoq said.

“It’s important to underline that the peoples of the Arctic that should be making the important decisions. It’s not for other countries whether they be in Europe, North America or Asia or elsewhere to determine the future. It should be for the Peoples of the Arctic to determine their own fate and future in cooperation with international partners.”

Greenland is an example of how that can be done right, he says.

The autonomous territory in the Kingdom of Denmark is rich in uranium and rare earth elements used in everything from cars and airplanes to computer screens and x-rays projects.

Australia’s Greenland Minerals and Energy Limited will be exploiting the Kvanefjeld project in South Greenland, something that will create jobs, know-how and much needed infrastructure in this remote region.

The mining question hasn't been without controversy, but the Greenlandic government is convinced that it's doing things right. Resource extraction is providing much needed economic diversification, especially important when 90 percent of Greenland's current exports is related to the volatile fishing industry.

Resource development in the Arctic, guided and regulated by the indigenous communities who live there, is key to moving ahead in the future, said Tara Sweeney, an Inupiat businesswoman from Alaska who is now Chair of the Arctic Economic Council, a body set up under Canada's Arctic Council chairmanship (2013-2015) to promote business in northern communities.

"The people of the Arctic are your Arctic experts," she said. "We are subject matter experts with a knowledge base that should not be overlooked or undervalued. We are successful businessmen and women who also hunt, fish and gather.

"The perfect de-risking agent for any project or economic development opportunity is local buy-in."

At the conference, Saami politician Aili Keskitalo finished her address with a challenge to the political and business leaders in the audience.

"I would wish for less (romanticization) of the industrial possibilities and more open eyes to the harsh reality of what our skies, our lands and seas are telling us," she said.

"We often hear arguments about how (indigenous peoples) must adjust to changing times and we have done so. That is why we are still here. Now it's the governments and business sector's turn to change their values as well as their attitudes and actions towards the world's indigenous peoples."

This story is posted on Alaska Dispatch News as part of [Eye on the Arctic](#), a collaborative partnership between public and private circumpolar media organizations.

Direct Link: <http://www.adn.com/article/20160127/stop-romanticizing-arctic-development-say-indigenous-leaders>

Native American church sues postal service over seizure of 'sacramental' marijuana



(Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian)

By Noelle Crombie | The Oregonian/OregonLive

Email the author | Follow on Twitter

on January 28, 2016 at 11:10 AM, updated January 28, 2016 at 2:12 PM

Leaders of a Native American church have sued the U.S. Postal Service in federal court after the government seized marijuana that church leaders say was intended for religious use by a member on Ohio.

Leaders of the Utah-based [Oklehueha Native American Church](#) said the federal government violated their right to religious freedom when authorities seized marijuana intended for use as part of "Native American spiritual healing practices" by a member who suffers from cancer.

Joy Graves leads a Cottage Grove branch of the church. Graves and James Mooney, the church's spiritual leader, are listed as plaintiffs in the suit, filed this month in U.S. District Court in Portland.

The church, which the suit says serves the Oglala Sioux Tribe of Pine Ridge as well as other Native American tribes, incorporates "medicine men," cannabis "and various other natural herbs and plants" into its religious practices, according to court documents.

The suit claims that the church's use of the U.S. Postal Service to send "sacramental cannabis" to a member in Ohio are protected by the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which among other things protects Native American use of peyote.

In a written statement, the U.S. Postal Service said the package was seized "based on obvious signs that it contained a controlled substance... Under

federal law, regardless of state law, a person is prohibited from sending controlled substances -- such as marijuana -- through the mail."

In early December, Graves attempted to mail a package that included about five ounces of marijuana to the Ohio church member. Graves sent the package via priority mail from a Eugene post office.

Later that month, Graves learned that law enforcement seized the package at a postal facility in Portland. Graves, according to the suit, told the official that the marijuana was to be used as part of the church's "spiritual healing practices."

The official told Graves that it is illegal under the federal Controlled Substances Act to mail marijuana and that the package would not be "returned, released or delivered to the church member in Ohio."

"Each day the sacrament is delayed, the healing process provided through the church is denied to its member," the suit states.

The lawsuit asks the court to grant a temporary restraining order requiring the postal service to return the cannabis to the church.

Direct Link:

http://www.oregonlive.com/marijuana/index.ssf/2016/01/native_american_church_sues_po.html

[Updated] State Agents Investigate Yoga Instructor Because She Was Accused of Giving Bird Feathers to Kids

Cultural appropriation: a crime against nature.

[Robby Soave](#) Jan. 27, 2016 4:35 pm



• Renee Bierbaum / Facebook

The trouble isn't quite over for Renee Bierbaum—the widow, mother, and martial artist [whose home-based yoga studio was threatened](#) by her county government and a Native-American activist accusing her of cultural appropriation. Two officers from Florida's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recently visited Bierbaum at her house to investigate whether she was illegally selling migratory bird feathers.

The FWC received an anonymous tip—it's not clear who sent it—that Bierbaum was "dealing in illegal bird feathers" by giving them to children during her yoga and art workshops for kids. She was also accused of possessing headdresses with wrongfully-acquired feathers in them.

"I don't own those hats," Bierbaum says. "I just model them."

State and federal laws prohibit people from, possessing, trading, or selling migratory bird feathers. Native Americans, however, can apply for special permits to sell feathers from hawks and eagles.

Bierbaum told *Reason*—and the officers who questioned her—that she wasn't peddling feathers.

"I said, 'You're welcome to search my house,'" Bierbaum says. "[The officer] goes, 'No, that's not necessary. It is illegal to deal, sell, or give away migratory bird feathers.' I already knew that, but thank you so much. They were nice gentleman."

The anonymous nature of the accusation makes it impossible to know for sure who sicced the authorities on Bierbaum. But a thread at newagefraud.org—a website for Native Americans to call out people who sell Native American ceremonies and memorabilia, in violation of their spiritual beliefs—provides a clue. One of the posts speculates that Bierbaum is "providing kids with illegal feathers." Other posts in the same thread were written by user "White Horse," whose real name is Sal Serbin.

Serbin is in fact the very same Native American activist who alerted county officials to the fact that Bierbaum's at-home yoga studio was in violation of a zoning ordinance. He did so because he resented the fact that she planned to host a sweat lodge retreat. Sweat lodges are a part of Native American culture, and Serbin objects to anyone using them to turn a profit.

"I'm over this guy," says Bierbaum. "This is war."

Serbin did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

As for Bierbaum's yoga studio, she has already raised the money necessary to apply for a permit—thanks to a [wealth of donations](#) from sympathetic people all over the world. She also obtained legal assistance to help her finally get it up and running.

In the meantime, Bierbaum is allowed to teach yoga—on her own property—but only if she doesn't try to make any money from it.

Updated on January 28 at 12:30 p.m.: In a statement to *Reason*, Serbin confirmed that he contacted the authorities about Bierbaum. He said he sent the FWC the following message: "Renee Bierbaum is in possession of and has distributed feathers in violation of the Migratory Bird Act. The distribution occurred within a classroom setting where fees were paid in part for the feathers."

He also told me, "if Renee still wants to push this issue I do still have more information that could impact Renee Bierbaum's reputation and business."

Direct Link: <http://reason.com/blog/2016/01/27/state-agents-investigate-yoga-instructor>

Too white or too Lakota: Professor finds beauty in dual heritage

Alyssa Mae, 16 hrs ago

Thomas Gannon wasn't white, but he wasn't Lakota either. The Lakota called him ieska, Lakota for "halfbreed." His white friends from college called him Thomas Ganjen, a cross between his last name and the derogatory native slang word "injun." He was an outsider. Too white for the Lakota. Too Lakota for the whites.

Gannon is a professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He joined the faculties of the English and the Ethnic Studies Institute in 2003, where he primarily teaches Native American literature.

Despite his academic interest in Native American culture, it took years for Gannon to accept and take pride in his mixed-blood heritage.

"One time I declared myself 'aracial,'" Gannon said. "I'm not part of any race."

His mother, Marie, was from a subdivision of the Lakota people called the Mniconjou. His father, Tom, was an Irishman and left the family when Gannon was 4 years old.

Gannon grew up in Rapid City, South Dakota, a poverty-stricken town at the foot of the Black Hills where touristic images of cowboys and Indians run rampant. His family lived on the poor side of town and relied on commodity food handed out by the government.

"Commodity cheese is an Indian's best friend. We'd cut off these big slabs like Velveeta," Gannon said. "But I wouldn't recommend commodity beef. We could never figure out what to do with it. It was like dog food."

Racism was prominent in southern South Dakota between the local whites and the local Native Americans. A lot of the children in town were sons and daughters of white ranchers, and Gannon was ashamed to be seen in public with his Lakota mother.

“She’d take me to Kmart, and as soon as we’d get there I’d run and hide,” Gannon said. “I was afraid my fellow fourth grade students would see me with a ‘squaw.’”

His mother wasn’t a traditional Native American woman; she was a townswoman like Gannon’s maternal grandmother, Molly, raised in boarding schools where the importance of her own cultural heritage was nil.

But Gannon and his family experienced racism even without a strong cultural background.

He spent his summers with his grandmother in Fort Pierre, South Dakota. She was a warm and enjoyable person and the townspeople loved her.

“She was the best person to live in Fort Pierre, South Dakota,” Gannon said.

Later on in life, Gannon received a photograph of his grandmother dressed in full Native American garb. His first thought was that his grandmother must have been a traditional Lakota.

Instead, he found out his grandmother was marched through the main streets dressed as Sacagawea for a Lewis and Clark celebration.

“Why would an old Lakota woman have to pretend to be Sacagawea?” Gannon said. “I never got the chance to ask her if she ever had any weird feelings about the whole impersonation.”

Gannon said this is a racial misunderstanding that occurs often in society. He said the notion of the term Native American is false. It was made up by Euro-Americans to explain this wide mass of different cultures, languages, and religious beliefs and practices.

“Mainstream Americans have this idea of Native America being one cohesive group,” Gannon said. “That’s one of the biggest problems I get when teaching Native American literature.”

Gannon always knew he was going to be in literature, but he’d never thought about teaching.

“I was a book nerd from fourth grade on,” Gannon said.

He had his own rhyming dictionary by fourth grade, reading Shakespeare by junior high and was dabbling in literary criticism by high school. He bought and read books by beat poets and British Romantics.

He was first drawn to British Romanticism because of its connection to the Lakota notion that other species are kin. His favorite works were by William Blake, Mary Shelley and John Keats.

“They had this empathy for other species I didn’t see anywhere else in Western literature. I was drawn to that,” Gannon said.

It was when Gannon went back to college to get a Ph.D. in British Romanticism that the direction of his life changed. A mentor found a photograph of his mom and suggested he should look into Native American literature.

“He basically said ‘you shouldn’t be in British Romanticism then. They come a dime a dozen. You should be in Native American Literature,’” Gannon said.

It was through Native American literature that Gannon finally made peace with his mixed-blood heritage.

At age 30, he began reading literature by Native American and mixed-blood authors who had pride in their heritage. He began to see the advantages to being part of two different worlds.

Works by Gerald Vizenor introduced Gannon to the notion of the “cross-blood trickster.” He said that being of mixed blood allowed him unique access to both sides – almost like being bilingual.

Gannon also said that being biracial means being a “walking deconstruction of race.” He enjoys the idea of contradicting those who consider race an essentialist category.

He aims to publish his own works about his experience as a mixed-blood person and bird watching, his beloved hobby.

Now as a professor teaching at UNL, he takes pride in changing his students’ perceptions of a culture he denied for so long. He has his students read works such as the “Almanac by the Dead” by Leslie Marmon Silko.

“I get so many papers that say ‘I didn’t know Indians were still here. They don’t teach this stuff in high school,’” Gannon said. “I like to reply ‘Well unluckily for you, they stuck around and wrote things that you have to read as an assignment now.’”

Gannon said he brings his quirky sense of humor to every class and enjoys making his students laugh. He jokes that “if you don’t bring trickster humor to bear upon the trauma of Native history, you’ll end up crying in your beard like a character in a Sherman Alexi novel.”

Gannon never intended to teach. He is a fatalist: he considers his life and his teaching practice to be “fate by god,” or as one of his friends once told him “someone meant for that to happen.”

“I’m like a leaf floating down a stream. I’m fine wherever I end up. I just go with the flow,” he said.

Whether he is searching for snowy owls on the back roads of western Nebraska in his Subaru Forester or teaching Native American literature to his students, Gannon is thankful for all of his experiences.

“Why would I regret that I wasn’t born rich and white? That would be stupid,” Gannon said. “I wouldn’t be me anymore.”

Direct Link: http://www.dailynebraskan.com/arts_and_entertainment/too-white-or-too-lakota-professor-finds-beauty-in-dual/article_ea762f0a-c572-11e5-a8ce-53d318f1aeaf.html

Natalie Portman Dons Valentino Gown With Metis Design At 'Jane Got A Gun' Premiere

The Huffington Post Canada | By [Madelyn Chung](#)

Posted: 01/28/2016 1:01 pm EST Updated: 01/28/2016 4:59 pm EST

We’re always big fans of [Natalie Portman](#)’s style, but this gown may just be our fave yet.

On Wednesday, the 34-year-old actress attended the New York premiere of "Jane Got A Gun" donning a dress from [Valentino's resort 2016 collection](#), which is based on Metis artist Christi Belcourt's "Water Song" painting.



The sheer embroidered floor-length frock featured delicate floral motifs and raw edges on the sleeves. The Academy Award-winning actress paired the gown with a simple black clutch, to not defer away from the dress.



For her beauty look, Portman, who is set to star as Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in the upcoming film, "Jackie," opted for a soft smoky eye, well-groomed brows and a dark red lip. Her hair was pulled back into a chic chignon, with a few wavy tendrils framing her face.



This isn't the first time we've seen a resort 2016 Valentino gown on the red carpet, however. Back in December, "The Revenant" actress Melaw Nakehk'o made her red carpet debut wearing a dress from the same collection to the film's premiere.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/28/natalie-portman-valentino_n_9100730.html